

LEE KUAN YEW
*Distinguished
Visitors*
PROGRAMME

PUBLIC LECTURE SERIES

Dr Harvey V. Fineberg

M.D., Ph.D., Institute of Medicine President

Protect your Health:

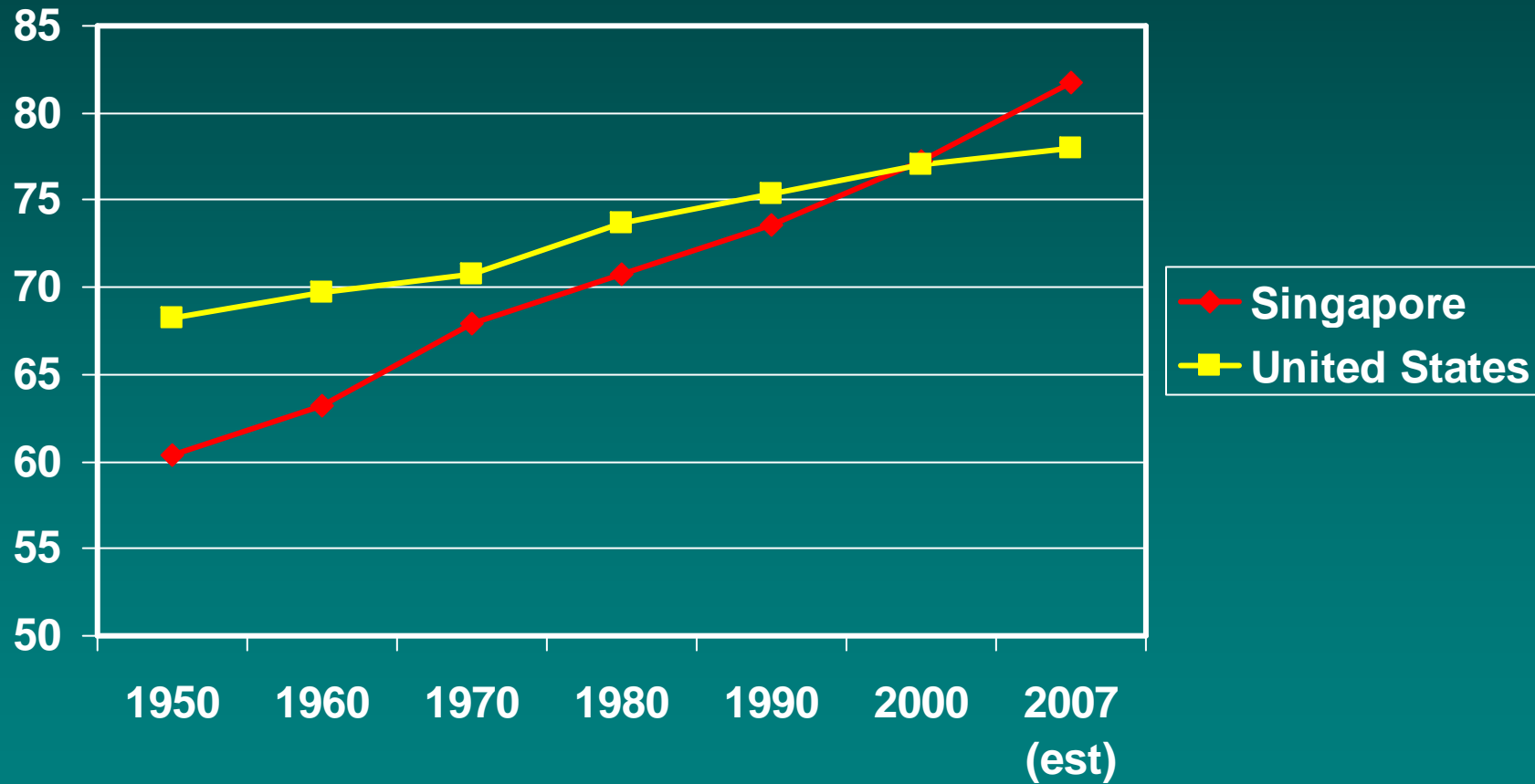
WHY PREVENTING DISEASE SEEMS
SO DIFFICULT AND STEPS YOU CAN
TAKE TO PRESERVE YOUR HEALTH



Protect Your Health

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Life Expectancy at Birth



Prevent Disease—Protect Health

- Obstacles to prevention of disease
- Ways to overcome these obstacles
- Steps to protect your health

Prevention

Why Prevention Is A Hard Sell
Ten Obstacles—Ten Antidotes

Why Prevention is a Hard Sell

1. Success is invisible (Do we count the number of people who did *not* get a heart attack? Did *not* die of pertussis? Etc.)
2. Lack of drama (organ transplant vs the organ donor who was not wearing a seat belt when his car crashed)
3. Statistical lives (individual stories are more compelling: child stuck in the well vs millions of children stuck in poverty)

Why Prevention is a Hard Sell

4. Long delay before rewards appear
5. Benefits do not accrue to the “investor” or payer (when third parties pay for preventive services)
6. Persistent behavior (or avoidance) may be required (much harder than a one-time fix)
7. Bias against errors of commission (side effects of vaccine regarded as worse than identical effects of disease)

Why Prevention is a Hard Sell

8. Acceptance of avoidable harm as being normal (automobile accidents; spouse abuse; obesity; etc.)
9. Double standard of evaluation compared to treatment of disease (prevention is expected to produce net savings; therapies, merely to be cost-effective)
10. Possible conflicts with commercial interests (tobacco), personal preferences (drugs, motorcycles without helmets, etc.), or religious beliefs (condoms)

Antidotes to Obstacles to Prevention

1. Make the invisible visible
2. Stress long-lasting benefits as well as delays
3. Promote compassion for the group as the mark of a mature society
4. Bring favorable incentives into alignment with prevention
5. Regard errors of omission and errors of commission with equal weight

Antidotes to Obstacles to Prevention

6. Expose the “normal” as “avoidable”
7. Apply a single standard of evaluation to treatment and prevention
8. Resist commercial interests adverse to health
9. Educate
10. Lead by example

Steps you can take
to protect your health

TIP #1

If you smoke, quit.

If you don't smoke, don't start.

TIP #2

Eat a variety of foods,
none to excess.

TIP #3

Make exercise a routine part of your day.

TIP #4

Drink alcohol in moderation,
if you drink, and avoid
addictive drugs.

TIP #5

Wear your seatbelt whenever you are in a moving vehicle.

TIP #6

Immunize your children
against preventable disease.
Take recommended vaccine
for yourself.

TIP #7

Protect yourself when you travel.

TIP #8

Get screening tests for silent, treatable conditions and risk factors that threaten your health.

TIP #9

If you are sexually active,
use a condom.

TIP #10

Take prescribed medication as prescribed and do not take unnecessary medicine, whether prescribed or over the counter.

TIP #11

Devise a personal and family disaster preparedness plan.

TIP #12

Rely on reliable sources
of health information.

Bonus TIP

Enjoy Life!

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