

“Preventive medicine must be a priority”

An unhealthy lifestyle is currently causing 73 percent of deaths around the world, says Gilberto Ururahy in this interview with NordicLight. “To treat a disease is more expensive than to prevent it.”

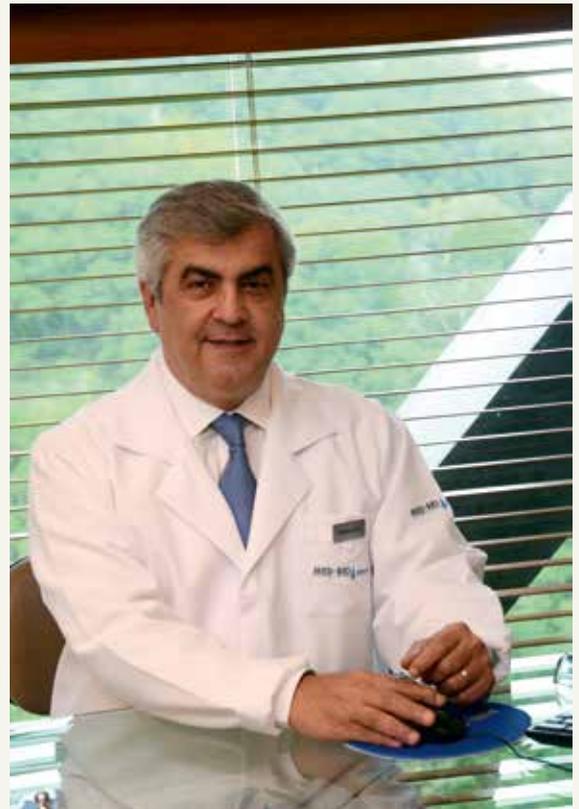
This is why preventive medicine needs to gain momentum on the Brazilian agenda, says the Medical Director of Med-Rio, Gilberto Ururahy. The economic crisis that hit Brazil so hard over the last few years has also had a serious impact on the health of both individuals and companies. Mr. Ururahy is however an optimist looking forward.

The 2018 elections are coming up. What should be the priorities in health care?

Prevention. All around the world, we are witnessing a huge growth for clinics that focus on prevention. It is much more expensive to treat a disease than to properly take care of your health. An inadequate lifestyle is the cause of many diseases. Tobacco and a sedentary lifestyle as well. Obesity leads to Type 2 diabetes. At our clinic, we see this every day, and it is fundamental to promote a healthier way of life to avoid obesity, high blood pressure, diabetes and cancer - some of the diseases that take more lives today. In Brazil, someone dies every minute of a heart attack. The universities also need to be aware of the evolution we see in medicine. Generations of doctors have learned how to treat but not how to prevent a disease. In October, Med-Rio entered into a partnership with PUC-Rio to create a course for health workers. We will focus on check-ups, prevention and lifestyle. Prevention is the path to survival, also for players on the supplementary health care and health insurance market.

What was the impact of the economic crisis on the health sector?

Unemployment is high and health insurance companies depend on company plans. When the companies have to let people go, the health insurance companies lose revenues. A second factor is that, historically, the health insurance providers calculated that a person would live an average of ten years after retiring. Today, they live much longer.



Gilberto Ururahy is a specialist in preventive medicine and the founder of MedRio Check-Up.

How do you evaluate the corporate lifestyle in Brazil today?

I usually say that Brazil is harming the Brazilians. Companies are trying to adapt to the crisis, but stress has invaded the corporate world, and studies that we have made show that 70 percent of the executives suffer from high levels of stress in the working environment. From 2016 to 2017, depression and anxiety diagnoses have become more common. The companies need to keep in mind that it is the human capital that will make the company grow, and they have to take care of their employees. A preventive check-up program would point out any risk factors.

How can we change the current situation?

People need to practice sports or some kind of physical activity, eat healthily and sleep enough. The companies also play an important role in turning to clinics or consultants that have the capacity to support them in a competent and ethical way. A medical check-up should be seen as an instrument for company stability. It is very expensive to substitute an employee that has fallen ill, and that is why it is so much better to prevent people from falling ill in the first place. ■