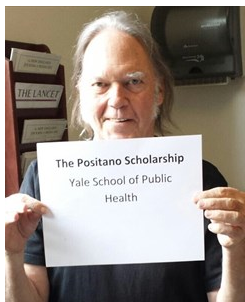


Podiatric Medicine and Orthopedics as Public Health Prevention



When Dr. Rock Positano pursued his Master of Public Health degree he already had a vision for making podiatric medicine and orthopedics a holistic practice. One of his Yale mentors, Professor Eric Mood, was aware of emerging research started by the Ford Motor Company on underfoot accidents, and he understood the importance of feet in injury prevention. Mood's encouragement along with Professor Lowell Levin's book "Medicine on Trial," brought home to Positano that surgery should only be undertaken when absolutely necessary.



Known as the foot specialist to luminaries such as Joe DiMaggio (https://www.hss.edu/newsroom_joe-dimaggio-send-off.asp) and Neil Young (https://www.hss.edu/newsroom_neil-young-brain-aneurysm-symptoms-hss-rock-positano.asp), Positano is a pioneer in the field of non-surgical interventions for problems of the feet and ankles. "When one's foot hurts, it's distracting and leads to increased injuries. This is not just about industrial accidents," says Positano. Foot injuries affect the focus and attention of

surgeons, bankers, teachers, and anyone else who stands to do their work.

The immediate impact on quality of life means people don't put off seeing the doctor like they might for other care, and neuromuscular skeletal problems in the lower extremities turn out to mirror overall health. "A foot problem will bring people in," says Positano. In fact, foot pain and gait problems don't only affect the knees, hips and back. They're also predictors of hypertension, cardiovascular disease, diabetes and other conditions, allowing the podiatrist a special role in preventive health care.

Positano's, DPM, MSc, MPH '89, medical practice is all about getting to people before there is a problem. There is a whole body attached to the foot/ankle to consider, he says. His textbook, *Systemic Disease Manifestations in the Foot, Ankle and Lower Extremity*, which details these connections is due out in the summer of 2017.

Dr. Positano is founder and director of the **Non-Surgical Foot and Ankle Service** (<http://www.hss.edu/non-surgical-foot-ankle.asp>) and the Joe DiMaggio Sports Medicine Center at the Hospital for Special Surgery in New York City and Deputy Chairman of the New York College of Podiatric Medicine. He is foot and ankle consultant for the NY Mets and NY Giants and consults with the major news networks. He is also on the faculty of the Weill Cornell Medical College.

He hopes that support from the Positano Scholarship Fund will encourage other medical practitioners to prioritize prevention and public health in their practices. Both grateful patients and supporters of this ethos have contributed to the fund, and Positano plans to continue this legacy through involvement of his children in its stewardship.

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