Viewpoint: ‘The average American celebrates just one healthy birthday after the age of sixty-five. Longevity evangelists argue that it doesn’t have to be this way’

Many of us have come to expect that our bodies and minds will deteriorate in our final years—that we may die feeble, either dependent or alone. Paradoxically, this outcome is a kind of success. For most of history, humans didn’t live long enough to confront the ailments of old age.

Follow the latest news and policy debates on sustainable agriculture, biomedicine, and other ‘disruptive’ innovations. Subscribe to our newsletter.
SIGN UP

A growing number of celebrity doctors, futurists, and so-called biohackers now argue that it doesn’t have to be this way. There are, by some estimates, hundreds of specialized “longevity clinics”—including some that charge six-figure annual fees—which claim to offer more of the world’s most valuable commodity: years of healthy life. Perhaps the most prominent longevity evangelist is Peter Attia, the author, with Bill Gifford, of the best-selling book “Outlive: The Science and Art of Longevity.” Through his telemedicine practice in Austin, Texas, for an undisclosed price, Attia offers health advice, diagnostic tests, exercise protocols, and supplements to a wealthy and exclusive clientele.

…

The increasing obsession with longevity has inspired a backlash. Many in the life-extension movement are quacks or hacks who peddle pills, potions, and false promises; longevity skeptics tend to see the loss of our capacities as something to accept, not avoid. Ezekiel Emanuel, an oncologist and a health-policy professor at the University of Pennsylvania, derides Attia as an “American immortal” who overcomplicates straightforward advice. “The idea that you’re going to get another healthy decade of life just by doing the things he says is hocus-pocus.”

This is an excerpt. Read the original post here