



The Denial of Aging: Perpetual Youth, Eternal Life, and Other Dangerous Fantasies

Muriel R. Gillick M.D.

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Listen to a short interview with Dr. Muriel Gillick
Host: Chris Gondek | Producer: Heron & Crane

You've argued politics with your aunt since high school, but failing eyesight now prevents her from keeping current with the newspaper. Your mother fractured her hip last year and is confined to a wheelchair. Your father has Alzheimer's and only occasionally recognizes you.

Someday, as Muriel Gillick points out in this important yet unsettling book, you too will be old. And no matter what vitamin regimen you're on now, you will likely one day find yourself sick or frail. How do you prepare? What will you need?

With passion and compassion, Gillick chronicles the stories of elders who have struggled with housing options, with medical care decisions, and with finding meaning in life. Skillfully incorporating insights from medicine, health policy, and economics, she lays out action plans for individuals and for communities. In addition to doing all we can to maintain our health, we must vote and organize--for housing choices that consider autonomy as well as safety, for employment that utilizes the skills and wisdom of the elderly, and for better management of disability and chronic disease.

Most provocatively, Gillick argues against desperate attempts to cure the incurable. Care should focus on quality of life, not whether it can be prolonged at any cost.

"A good old age," writes Gillick, "is within our grasp." But we must reach in the right direction.

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