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"Anti-aging Medicine: Is it possible to reverse the process of aging?"

Dr Arthur Tjandra

On 30 January 2008, Dr. Arthur Tjandra, an American-board-certified anti-aging medicine and aesthetic medicine physician, spoke at the Wee Kim Wee Lunchtime Talk. His talk was titled, "Anti-aging Medicine: Is it possible to reverse the process of aging?"

Dr. Tjandra began by defining the concept of aging as a process of gradual maturation in human beings. Every person goes through a lot of "pauses" in his life such as electropause, biopause, psychopause and many more. Successful or healthy aging refers to a process by which deleterious effects on the body and mind are minimized. It has the potential and power to add a myriad of dimensions to the remaining years of our lives. By sharing visual examples of different aged men and women, he helped the audience understand the difference between successful and unsuccessful aging.

Dr. Tjandra then proceeded to list factors that affect longevity, such as genetics, medical treatments, lifestyle and exposure to environmental toxins. He also talked about theories of aging such as "The Wear and Tear Theory" which believes that our bodies simply wear out due to the damage and exertion caused by living and "The Telomerase Theory" that holds many promising possibilities for the field of anti-aging medicine.

The speaker then moved on to define "Anti-aging Medicine" as a process that involves scientific research and addresses how to prevent or reverse the effects of aging and help people live longer and healthier lives. Anti-aging strategies are grouped according to the five pillars of anti aging medicine; Diet, Exercise, Stress Reduction, Nutritional Supplements and Hormone Replacement Therapy. Diet was defined by Dr. Tjandra to be the most important of all. He also described a balanced anti-aging diet with a recommended intake of carbohydrates, energy, protein and fat. "Eating Right for a Longer Life" is the mantra of staying healthy.

By sharing personal anecdotes, Dr. Tjandra made the session even more interesting for the audience. He then moved on to the second pillar; exercise. Flexibility, core stabilization, balance, resistance and speed form the basis of an ideal exercise program. Stress Reduction, the third pillar of anti-aging medicine, helps prevent damage to the immune system. Stress is a major contributor to many physical and mental problems and can be minimized through activities such as yoga, meditation, massage as well as sexual intercourse. Dr. Tjandra repeatedly emphasized the importance of sleep, as too little sleep also accelerates the aging process. Nutritional supplements as well as hormone replacement therapy were described as sound helpmates for anti-aging programs.

Aesthetic medicine was the next topic Dr. Tjandra chose to elaborate on. Aesthetic medicine is a part and parcel of anti-aging medicine, and helps those who want to improve their looks and regain self-confidence. Intrinsic aging, sleep lines, gravity, expression lines and most importantly, photo damage are the key factors that affect our skin. By presenting scientific studies, Dr. Tjandra advocated the importance of looking good in our society. Being mentally and physically fit instills a sense of confidence in our capabilities. When we feel good, we also look good.

The speaker ended his talk with numerous tips for the audience that would allow them to make effective and informed decisions for a healthy living on a day-to-day basis. Most importantly, his elaboration on the topic of anti-aging medicine allowed the audience to understand how they can gracefully adapt to change and enjoy the benefits of healthy aging.