

When young people turn to *yangsheng*, it might be somewhat disturbing

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It is naturally assumed that young people should be at their most vigorous in terms of their physical condition, and are as yet decades away from the age exhibiting excessive faith in the curative property of a bottle, or obsession with means of *yangsheng* (care for good health).

I am not belittling the concept of *yangsheng*. As a salient feature emanating from Confucian and Taoist outlook, it is usually cited as evidence of the superiority of traditional Chinese medicine emphasis on “preventive medicine.”

Nevertheless, it is a bit disturbing when *yangsheng* is increasingly recommended or extolled by Generation Z, or those still younger.

According to a recent survey by CCTV on La Belle Vie in China, among people aged 18 to 35, health-related consumption ranked in third place among the most desired items of consumption for 2023.

Another survey on the nutraceutical consumption trend for Generation Z, published in 2022, found that young people are among the chief consumers of nutraceuticals, with a permanent urban resident spending on average in excess of 1,000 yuan (US\$142) per month with a view to the upkeep of their health. This might include tuina, physiotherapy, or various kinds of medicine believed to be curative for shoulder peri-arthritis, or spinal issues linked with a sedentary lifestyle.

The paradigm shift is, of course, excess use of computers or mobile phones.

I have known of a college student who constantly blames his desk, chair, the air, the

humidity or temperature for a wide range of chronic physical conditions.

Like many of his coevals, he spent an ordinate amount of time before a laptop, but would not hear of any suggestion that this sedentary life might lead to spinal rigidity, shoulder pain, and failing eyesight, and his symptoms might ease if he bestirs himself from his seat from time to time, venture outside for some fresh air, walk or exercise.

I am fully sympathetic with his plight, though my sympathy diminished when I realized it was not easy for him to yank oneself from the screen.

While escorting my wife recently in a GI endoscopy examination at Renji Hospital in Pudong, I was astonished by the number of patients awaiting

the examination, with many of them trying to obtain information about pre-test medication, how to be alerted about one's turn for the tests, and other issues.

The pandemonium naturally led to simmering rage as to why all patients had to thread their way to a machine for relevant instructions, and why there was only one nurse who tried to field queries from all directions with professional despatch and admirable patience.

There was natural bewilderment as to why not commit more space, seats and nurses to those people badly in need of medical assistance.

But then I thought again.

In the socialized medicine scenario, I was required to contribute my humble

share toward their medical expenditure.

If they get to be examined in more ideal conditions, it means I would have to foot part of the bill.

I would willingly do my bit for elderly people, and those afflicted with congenital deficiencies, and those exemplary civil servants who had overworked in serving the people.

But what's wrong with those people much younger than me who were jostling among the multitudes waiting for their turn for a GI endoscopy?

I was reminded of the saying that “YOU yourself are primarily responsible for your own health.” Not the medical professionals, the Taoist sages, or the numerous quacks trying to palm off their panaceas onto the gullible elderly or, increasingly,

vulnerable youth.

Here is my two cents for those suffering from dyspepsia.

When you can walk, avoid the use of escalators or other mechanical conveyances. Reserve them for the elderly and the needy.

When you are consuming your food, enjoy it, reflecting how lucky you are to be able to enjoy the simple fare even though your role in its production is suspicious.

When you are answering the call of nature, think of the wondrous natural cycle and recycle and upcycle of everything under the sun, and refuse to be tempted by that stupid gadget in your hand. The perpetual hysteria of a laugh track and noises audible from many public toilets are decidedly in bad smell.



A shopper takes her tea drink from a *yangsheng*-themed beverage shop in Xining, capital of west China's Qinghai Province. With the rising focus among young individuals on *yangsheng*, which emphasizes health enhancement, businesses are introducing health-conscious products to cater to this growing demand. — IC