

Health seekers and healthy misery; the perfection of a healthy death

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The search of good health is today a smaller part of the life-style industry. Every person who is interested in health news is now able to find a large amount of information for acquiring and maintaining good health. A well established business network stands behind the boosting of health marketing which supports new concepts for what health is. Pharmaceutical and para-pharmaceutical companies, healthcare and well-being products, fitness and anti-obesity industry, food industry, make up the world of *health-oriented business*; an extremely successful business. With the aforementioned partners were gradually joined plastic and bariatric surgeons. The same happened with gastroenterologists who decided to be devoted to endogastric balloons.

The role of TV in marketing of health business is powerful. Numerous commercials and shows perform mass brainwashing for health and longevity, available for sale! Simple people participate in shows that aim to improve their health status, their physical appearance and consequently their quality of life; family members breaking into tears surround the main show scenes that take place in operation rooms!

Practically, health business products and services are offered for people who can pay for what they get. In a smaller degree, individuals who want very much to taste the participation in this new world may pay more than they can afford (credit cards, consumer loans). For example in Greece, at this period, huge amounts of money are spent for buying bottled green tea drinks, in extremely high prices; the company that sells that drink promises good health, loss of weight, antioxidant actions etc. Inside the crisis, such a success of a health promoting product became the talk of the country! It is such the sellers' greediness of gain, because of the awareness that the consumers' mania for green tea is continuing, that they are currently selling the product in small bottles only - so that the price will be the highest possible! This is a good example, that with a good marketing plan, people can spend much more for health promoting products; even by working more to afford them or by spending less for other needs.

The importance of adequate and high quality sleep in health is not emphasized so much in *health shows* because the products for sleep disorders are cheap. On the contrary, the importance of a nose surgery operation, for the improvement in breathing is highly assessed! Smoking reduction and walking in the street are not popular versus fitness equipment (treadmills, exercise bikes, vibration plates, and other) as well as anti-smoking centres, because the latter are advertised. The importance of relaxation during day and night is not adver-

tised, and it is ironic that people rest for less hours because they wish to buy more health promoting products; not hopeful reality! Because if health is becoming a product with barcode, people are misleded for what they really should do to live better. The confusion of people, who buy health promoting products, is obvious when many of them consume i.e. expensive cholesterol lowering drinks/yogurts together with their classical high lipid diet as if they were receiving an antidote! This happens because the active part of consuming is ending with the payment of the product; and this happens because *marketing weapons* target to sell and not to cure; if one is cured, he may stop buying!

Unfortunately, the same role is given to bariatric surgery. Desperate obese patients pay for losing kilos with the belief that money can save their lives in a miraculous way; they do not even know that after the bariatric operation they will eat 500 kcal per day, and will lose 20 Kilos only in the majority of cases. Which means that, many of them would not have been operated if they knew that the postoperative period is not at all pleasant, and that second and third operations will be needed soon if they continue to eat as they did in the past. What makes up a misery, is that many bariatric surgeons hide important information about the real indications of bariatric surgery, the complications, the mortality risk (especially when concomitant diseases and lack of caring environment are present) and the long postoperative period of *very low calorie diet*.

In Greece, the fake ticket to the *Healthy-Land* has now been sold out! But Greeks have financial problems, do not sleep well, do not rest adequately and do not eat properly, and therefore cannot be saved with the use of health promoting products and services...Recently, the Greek Banks advertise the new service of offering health examination tests via their partnership with luxurious private Hospitals; in this way they hope to attract customers who either are not pleased with the services of public hospitals or do not have health insurance (common in immigrants and low-income people without working experience). However, what this offer means in practice does not make up such an offer! Because if you visit the aforementioned centres, you are requested to make a large number of examination tests (because their doctors ask for them) that in the end you should sell your car to pay the "discounted" bill! They also may tell you that you need an operation (while this is not needed) and in that case you should sell your house, too (if you don't own a house then you may be saved from the operation).