**Living healthy is a choice**

Choice #2 Chao Zhang

While there are large numbers of advertising for fast food and temptations for alcohol or smoking, it is still up to us to be responsible for our own health and well-being. Doctors who choose to not treat patients with self-destructive vices are looking out for other patients who will benefit more from the limited resources that they have to treat patients. It is true that doctors cannot force patients to quit their habits, as they go hand in hand with personal entitlement. Doctors simply make suggestion to improve their patients’ success in their treatments. Smokers, drinkers and obese patients are unwanted by doctors because caring for them is too complicated and too much of a burden for their overcrowding number of patients. “God helps those who help themselves.” The same could be said for doctors and patients. If you take care of your health, the doctors would have no reason to turn down your treatments.

There are valid medical reasons to explain why doctors would not want to operate on obese patients, operating on these patients pose significant risk of complications due to health and pulmonary issues. Surgeons do not want to deal with complications during surgery, nor do they want to see post operation complications. An anonymous orthopedic surgeon stated that he has operated on thousands of obese patients for knee and hip replacements, but he is not pleased about it. He also states that prosthetics have limited life span and they are likely to wear out much faster in obese patients. Historically the obese patients are at high risk for complications during surgery.

Occasional alcohol consumption is not harmful to the human body, but excess drinking does have harmful effects on organs such as heart, liver and kidneys. Patients are less likely to receive transplants if they consume excess amounts of alcohol. The decision makes sense in the doctors’ point of view. Why spend thousands of dollars on futile procedures? Why would the doctors choose a patient who will likely continue damaging the new organ rather than a patient who takes care of their health? The healthy patient will put the new organ to better use and will live longer. In addition to alcohol affecting one’s health, it could harm others too. There are thousands of fatalities and critical injuries caused by drinking and driving every year.

Smoking is harmful to the human body, it is even labeled on the cigarette boxes. Nicotine impairs bone healing, and the failure rate in smoker patients is five times higher than a normal patient. If the bone does not heal properly, another surgery is required. Repeated surgery in the same area is asking for trouble. Lung cancer patients minimize their risk of heart attack during surgery if they stop smoking five weeks ahead of time. This also reduces post operation respiratory problems. Doctors cannot force patients to quit smoking. But lifestyle-induced problems brought on by bad habits make the patients hard to look after by the doctors.

While it is trouble for doctors to look after patients who have health issues brought on by their lifestyle choices, they genuinely care for the patients’ well-being. Doctors are there to save lives. If the patients do not value their own lives, why should the doctors waste their limited resource and time to save them? By eating healthy and exercise regularly, reduce the amount of alcohol being consumed, and quit smoking because of a doctor’s request. Patients increase their chances of living and improve their own well-being. This also save the doctors’ resource and time so by helping yourself, you directly help others as well. Doctors make recommendations to improve our lives and well-being, but ultimately it is up to us to follow through on their requests to change for the greater good.