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## The Guru of Anti-Aging

There's plenty doctors can do to control the effects of old age, says a leading light in the anti-aging medical movement

Since 1981, Dr. Ronald M. Klatz has served as the chief champion of anti-aging medicine. He coined the very term "anti-aging." In 1992, he became the founder and president of the American Academy of Anti-Aging Medicine, which he describes in his Internet bio as a "medical organization dedicated to the advancement of technology to detect, prevent, and treat aging-related disease and to promote research into methods to retard and optimize the human aging process." He isn't shy about expressing his support for the entire anti-aging arsenal of tools, including controversial drugs such as human growth hormone (HGH). He's even written books on the topic, including *Grow Young with HGH, Ten Weeks to a Younger You*, and *Hormones of Youth*.

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During a telephone interview with *BusinessWeek* Science Editor [Arlene Weintraub](#), Klatz discussed the history of anti-aging medicine, the controversies that have followed its success, and his hopes for the future of this nascent field. Following are edited excerpts from their conversation.

**What inspired you to get into anti-aging medicine?**  
The goal of medicine is to prolong life. That's what most of us doctors go into medicine to accomplish. One day I looked in the mirror, and I saw wrinkles. I said, "Physician, heal thyself." Until the 1980s, scientists didn't have a clue as to how or why we age. Then it became very clear that medicine was developing new technologies for dealing with genetic disorders and chronic degenerative diseases. Many of these diseases occur in the aged. I felt that if medicine could control the metabolic effects of aging, we could control aging itself.

**There's been a bit of controversy about the use of HGH, which was originally**

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**approved to promote growth in short children and to treat just a handful of diseases in adults. What is the role of HGH in the context of the entire anti-aging arsenal?**

HGH is the most extreme example in anti-aging medicine. About 10% of patients who are on the full regimen are taking HGH.

**Do you believe HGH reverses aging?**

This is a matter of semantics. It does reverse bone loss, muscle loss, and it improves hydration of tissue. We're reversing the physical processes of aging.

**What's your response to critics who say HGH isn't safe for otherwise healthy adults?**

When they say it's not safe, it's as if they're screaming "fire" in a crowded theater. There will still be critics who beat their chests and come up with bogus research saying there are side effects. Those only occur when someone's taking massive amounts. In adults we're merely replacing the hormone to the normal level of a 30-year-old. That's just one-third to one-seventh of the dose that's been shown to be safe in children. This drug has been used clinically over the last 20 years in hundreds of thousands of young people and tens of thousands of adults. There is no published literature showing that HGH has caused any permanent side effects, or death. It's one of the best-researched drugs out there. The critics shouldn't make [danger] proclamations without a scientific basis. Show me the studies that say these treatments cause cancer or diabetes.

**What else helps reverse the ravages of age?**

There's no single "age reversal" drug, but we have a lot of things that work. Exercise, for example, can change the biomarkers of aging. If you use testosterone or estrogen, it might help maintain the health of the cells in your body. That can improve the biomarkers of aging. Aging is not one global thing. We haven't yet found a single control switch.

**How quickly is the field of anti-aging medicine growing?**

AAM has grown from 12 physician members to 17,500 in 85 countries. We'll have 26 seminars in 2006, where we'll train 30,000 doctors worldwide. With 1,500 physicians certified in anti-aging medicine, we think it's the fastest-growing medical certification program in history.

**What's your ultimate hope for how the public might someday view anti-aging medicine?**

I believe that one day it will be considered malpractice for any physician not to do what anti-aging physicians do today.

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