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Homeopathy vs. Conventional Medicine

Many people debate which is more effective, homeopathic or conventional drugs. The claim is that conventional medicine is more effective because it treats the condition more quickly. On the other hand, homeopathy treats the body as a whole rather than treating just one body part. In addition, due to the plant-based composition of homeopathic treatments, there can be fewer chances of side effects with homeopathic medicine than with prescription drugs (Chase n.d). Therefore, homeopathy overall can be more beneficial than conventional medicine, as homeopathic treatments are more effective, contain more natural ingredients, and have fewer side effects than prescription drugs.

Homeopathy was founded over two centuries ago by a German physician, Samuel Hahnemann (1755-1843). Samuel got his medical degree in Erlangen in 1779. Fifteen years into his career, he was struggling financially. However, it was around that time that Samuel discovered a new concept of medicine. He began taking some doses of Cinchona, or bark, which was used to treat Malaria. When he took the doses, he discovered that the bark produces mild symptoms of Malaria without having the severity and harshness of the disease. The bark reduced the side effects of Malaria. Samuel began writing essays to prove the effectiveness of homeopathic remedies through his *Essay on a New Principle for Ascertaining the Curative Power of Drugs* in 1796 and *The Organon of the Healing Art* in

1810. In these essays, Hahnemann explained the principle behind homeopathy, that if a person had a sickness, the sickness could be cured by giving that person who is sick a medicine that, if given to a healthy person, would produce mild symptoms of the disease.

Homeopathic medicine is composed of various types of plants, minerals, and animal substances while conventional medicine is composed of chemical-based type of medications. Conventional medicine can be addictive, even abused, causing death and harm to the body. If it is not taken properly, it can unleash these harmful effects on the body. Unlike conventional medicine homeopathic medications are not addictive and cannot be overdosed. Homeopathic remedies focus on the patient rather on the disease Homeopathy recognizes that any disease symptoms occur within the whole person rather than what seems to be the affected area. With the properly diagnosed remedies, homeopathy can treat the whole person rather than just the disease. On the other hand, conventional medicine focuses only on the symptoms of the diseases. How this drug affects the rest of the body is not considered and it only tries to control the symptoms of that disease. As a result, conventional medicine does not really treat the disease; it simply suppresses the symptoms instead, causing harm to the other parts of the body. For example, if a person has high cholesterol and takes conventional medicine such as simvastatin, it would lower the total amount of cholesterol and reduce the risk of coronary heart disease, heart attack, and stroke. In addition, taking simvastatin can lead to various side effects ranging from body pain to irregular heart rates. On the other hand, garlic extract, a homeopathic alternative, treats diseases ranging from cholesterol to other types of cancers and parasites within the body.

To begin with, homeopathic medicine is more effective than conventional medicine. Arnica Montana, a homeopathic remedy, is used for relieving pain, bruising, and swelling

caused by injuries and surgeries. It contains the active ingredients: Homeopathic Arnica Montana 1 M (HPUS) and Homeopathic Arnica Montana 12 C (HPUS). In addition to that, Arnica Montana contains lactose and sucrose as inactive ingredients. Not only does Arnica Montana have active and inactive ingredients, but it also contains two chemicals called Helenian and dihydrohelenain. These two chemicals strengthen the immune system, kill bacteria cells, reduce blood cells that cause inflammation, and kill cancer cells. Along with that, Arnica can help a person get energy when they are in a state of being fatigued. Therefore, Arnica Montana brings more advantages to a person's health along with curing the pain. If Arnica Montana is not used safely, it can lead to negative side effects such as cardiac arrest, faster heartbeat, shortness of breath, diarrhea, and vomiting only if it isn't taken under supervision of a physician.

However, under the supervision of a physician, Norco (Hydrocodone and Acetaminophen), a conventional medicine, is not as effective as Arnica Montana and leads to negative side effects. Norco is used to relieve general pain throughout the body. It contains active ingredients such as Hydrocodone Bitartrate (5 mg) and Acetaminophen (325 mg). In comparison to Arnica Montana, Norco contains more inactive ingredients such as colloidal silicon dioxide, croscarmellose sodium, crospovidone, microcrystalline cellulose, povidone, pregelatinized starch, stearic acid and sugar spheres which are composed of starch derived from com, sucrose, and FD&C Yellow. Upon its use, Norco can bring over twenty dangerous side effects ranging from simple body pains to death. Although Norco can help treat pain, it can lead to addictiveness and many other side effects causing the body harm.

Followed by that, *Gymnema Sylvestre*, another homeopathic medicine, is used for treating diabetes, controlling the blood sugar, weight loss, cough, malaria, and laxative. *Gymnema sylvestre* is a plant that comes from India and Africa. The Hindi name for *Gymnema* is *gurmar* means "destroyer of sugar." According to some studies, taking *Gymnema* extract can help decrease the blood sugar level. It contains naturally occurring ingredients such as the *Gymnema* plant, gelatin, and magnesium stearate. *Gymnema* is a generally safe medication and has very little side effects to it. If not taken under doctor supervision, it can affect blood sugar levels to an extent that it can cause it to become a little too low. Overall, the *Gymnema* medicine is a very effective medication with minimal side effects that can help decrease blood sugar levels for those who have high sugar levels.

However, Glucophage (Metformin), a conventional drug used to treat type 2 diabetes, while effective, can lead to many side effects that can harm the body. Metformin contains an active ingredient called Metformin hydrochloride. Other ingredients Metformin contains is starch, povidone, crospovidone, magnesium stearate, hypromellose, and polyethylene glycol for coating of the tablets. Metformin can lead to over thirty different side effects ranging from normal abdominal discomfort to vomiting and even abnormal stools because of the harmful chemicals contained in the medicine. Metformin may treat type 2 diabetes, but it can lead to many negative effects that will harm the person more than it will help them.

Along with Metformin, St. John's Wort, a homeopathic medicine, is used mainly for treating depression. St. John's Wort is derived from yellow flowers that grow in the United States. According to the Cochrane Researchers, they conducted twenty nine trials with five thousand four hundred and eighty nine patients with major depression. St. John's Wort medicine was found to be very effective in these patients. It is composed of hypericin,

pseudohypericin, and various xanthenes. These ingredients increase dopamine and serotonin levels in the brain. Dopamine and serotonin are neurotransmitters. Dopamine triggers excitement and awareness while serotonin causes peacefulness and sleep. It also treats conditions that follow depression such as anxiety, tiredness, loss of appetite and difficulty sleeping, not to mention that it is used for attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD), and seasonal affective disorder (SAD). St. John's Wort is also used for assistance to stop smoking, migraines, muscle and nerve pains, and cancer. It comes in capsules, teas, and extracts. St. John's Wort can be safe if it is used properly. If not used properly, it can lead to side effects such as laziness and anxiety.

Not only St John's Wort is used to treat depression but Sertraline (Zoloft), a conventional drug, also treats major depression, anxiety, obsessive compulsive disorder, panic disorder, anxiety disorders, and stress. Although St. John's Wort and Zoloft treat the same area, they contain different ingredients and side effects. Zoloft's ingredients cause addiction and more side effects than St. John's Wort does. Zoloft contains active ingredients of Sertraline hydrochloride USP with doses of twenty five milligrams, fifty milligrams, and one hundred milligrams. Zoloft contains other inactive ingredients such as microcrystalline cellulose, sodium starch glycolate, hydroxypropyl cellulose, dibasic calcium phosphate dehydrate, magnesium stearate, hypromellose, titanium dioxide, polyethylene glycol, and polysorbate 80. Like any other conventional drug, the use of Zoloft does lead to side effects including Serotonin syndrome and low sodium levels. If abused, Zoloft can have dangerous side effects ranging from nausea and vomiting to abnormal bleeding or bruising throughout the body. Zoloft can affect the person psychologically causing more depression, suicidal thoughts, hallucinations, agitation, and restlessness. Clinical studies have shown that youth

that use antidepressants, including sertraline, become suicidal. Other users experience severe problems with their organs. Clearly, with all these side effects, Zoloft is a dangerous drug to take due to its physical and psychological side effects, addictiveness, and chemical ingredients.

Furthermore, Garlic, another common homeopathic remedy, is used for treating bacterial and fungal infections, getting rid of parasites such as ringworms, candida, vaginitis and thrush, detoxifies the body, reduces the growth rate of cancer cells within the body, helps prevent heart disease, helps lower blood and cholesterol levels, and treat wounds. Garlic's Latin name is *Allium Sativum* and originated in central Asia and spread out through the entire world. Garlic is made up of useful components such as Alliin, Allinase, Allicin, vitamins A, B, C. The use of Garlic is overall safe; however, it is more preferable to receive approval from your physician before consumption. Clearly, Garlic is a very effective medicine not only treating high cholesterol levels, but treating other issues ranging from infections and diseases.

Unlike Garlic, Zocor (Simvastatin), a conventional medicine, used for treating high cholesterol is less effective than garlic and is more harmful due to the amount of negative side effects. Zocor is used to reduce levels of LDL (low density lipoprotein), triglycerides, lowers risk of heart disease, and increases HDL (high density lipoprotein). Also, it is composed of the active ingredient, Zocor itself, ranging from certain doses of five milligrams to eighty milligrams. In addition to that, Zocor is made up of inactive ingredients such as ascorbic acid, citric acid, hydroxyl propyl cellulose, hypsomellose, iron oxides, lactose, magnesium stearate, microcrystalline cellulose, starch, and titanium dioxide. The use of Simvastatin leads to six common side effects including headaches, constipation, cold

symptoms, irregular heartbeats, vomiting, and fainting. Zocor can be addictive and abused leading to over twenty more dangerous side effects ranging from kidney problem to liver problems and muscle breakdown. Overall, Simvastatin may treat cholesterol, but it can lead to many side effects causing it to become more harmful than beneficial to the patient.

Last but not least, Kali Carbonicum, a homeopathic medicine, is used to treat low thyroid, or hypothyroidism. It is made from potassium carbonate. Kali Carbonicum is also used for arthritis, lower back pain, asthma, coughs, colds, pneumonia, headaches, itchy eyes and ears, stuffy nose, respiratory problems, skin problems, sleep disorders, and abdomen discomfort. Kali Carbonicum can lead a person to be anxious and consistently worry if not taken under supervision of a physician. In Conclusion, Kali Carbonicum can be very effective not only in low thyroid but in issues such as asthma, back pains, headaches, and respiratory problems.

Even under doctor's supervision, Synthroid, a conventional drug used to treat Synthroid could be as harmful as the side effects of kali Carbonicum. Synthroid contains the active ingredient levothyroxine sodium, synthetic crystalline, and tetraiodothyronine sodium salt. Inactive ingredients include Acacia, confectioner's sugar, lactose monohydrate, magnesium stearate, povidone, and talc. Like any other conventional drug, Synthroid can lead to over thirty side effects ranging from feverish symptoms to shortness of breath. Synthroid is also addicting causing even more serious side effects ranging from changes in consciousness, confusion, and loss of coordination to sudden headaches, and slurring in speech. All in all, similar to other conventional medications, Synthroid may help increase thyroid levels when they are low but can cause harmful side effects in the long run.

From an Islamic perspective, the uses of homeopathic medications are useful when curing a disease. In a hadith narrated by Abo Ad-Dardaa', the messenger of Allah said: "Verily Allaah has sent down illnesses, and He has sent down the cures. He has made (available) a cure for every illness, so take medical treatments, but do not treat illnesses with haram (substances)." Aboo Daawood (4). The meaning of this hadith is that for every illness that exists in this world, Allah sends a cure for everything but forbade the people to use haram substances as a cure for an illness. However, some homeopathic medicine contains alcohol which is haram. As Muslims, it is very important to watch out for homeopathic medications that contains alcohol in it. In another hadith narrated by Ibn Umar, the prophet (may peace be upon him) said: "Everything that intoxicates is khamr, and every kind of khamr is haraam." [And in one narration,] "Everything that intoxicates is haraam." [Saheeh Bukhari 10] In addition to that, An-Nasaa'ee narrated that Prophet Muhammad said: "Every intoxicant is haram. Verily Allah has a pact with every drinker of intoxicating beverages that He shall make him drink from the pus of wounds (of the people in the Hellfire)" [Muslim13] Prophet Muhammad has discussed the severity of using alcohol as a remedy for curing and that the punishment of a person using such substances will drink pus of wounds in Hell-fire. As I have said, some homeopathic medications are useful when curing a disease and are from Allah and other homeopathic medications that are made of alcohol are forbidden because of the toxicity.

All in all, the principles of homeopathic and conventional medicine are very different. Many people on different viewpoints, claiming either homeopathic or conventional medicine is more effective. Based on the five conventional and homeopathic drugs discussed earlier, it is clearly evident that Homeopathic Medicine is more effective than conventional medicine

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because of the fewer side effects it brings when treating a disease, and has more natural ingredients.