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The Monopoly of Modern Medicine

Introduction:

A paradigm shift has occurred in medical care over the past century. Holistic medicine, which used to be mainstream care, was pushed aside by the rapidly evolving technologies and advancements of conventional medicine. In the last century, there has been an unprecedented development of complex diagnostic and surgical equipment, specialized surgical procedures, and the formulation of a plethora of pharmaceutical drugs. Despite these great advancements in the medical field, statistics do not show a significant decrease in long-term illness or disease (Guarneri 100). In fact, statistics show an increase in all forms of cancers, heart disease, and organ dysfunction over the past seventy years (Heron). Conventional medicine has some success in dealing with acute illness but falls short in preventative care and curing disease long-term. Conventional medicine does not focus on finding the root cause of disease but instead is symptom-oriented. Its goal is to manage symptoms typically through surgery or pharmaceutical drugs which have many side effects of their own. Drugs may temporarily alleviate symptoms but oftentimes do not treat the underlying cause of those symptoms. In contrast, holistic medicine works to discover the root cause of disease, and works with the body to restore itself rather than just suppress symptoms. Holistic medicine is a viable form of healthcare as it promotes a patient's whole being, body, mind, and spirit, unlike conventional medicine.

Historiography:

In the beginning, God created man with a physical body and a spiritual soul. He made Adam and Eve both physically and spiritually perfect. God commanded them to “not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat from it you will certainly die” (Gen. 2.17 *NKJV*). After Adam and Eve ate of the tree, they did not immediately die physically. When God told them they would certainly die He was referring to an immediate spiritual death which would eventually lead to a physical death. God says “For the wages of sin is death” (Rom. 6.23). The moment Adam and Eve disobeyed God they died spiritually. Spiritual death is the beginning of metabolic deterioration in the physical body. There is a direct correlation between one’s spiritual health and physical health. Yet the spiritual, emotional, and mental health of a person are often dismissed when conventionally treating disease because these aspects are not tangible. But if medicine does not address the spiritual state as well as the physical state of the body, the quest for health is in vain. A person only can obtain a state of health when he takes into account both his physical and spiritual condition as they directly affect each other.

The correlation between body and spirit is not a man-made idea. God is the creator of the body and soul. He is the giver of life and is the healer of both body and soul. Psalm 103 states that God is the One “who forgives all your iniquities, who heals all your diseases. . .so that your youth is renewed like the eagle’s” (Psa. 103.3-5). Man is in need of spiritual healing as well as physical healing. The physical human body will eventually die no matter what kind of medical treatment it receives in this life. Therefore the most crucial healing is of the soul. Holistic medicine is simply a form of healthcare that takes an individual’s overall physical, spiritual, mental, and emotional wellbeing into account when treating disease.

Not only are the spirit and the body connected to each other, but the physical body parts also are interrelated. Before specialization became prominent in Western medicine, the average

physician knew how to treat the entire body holistically. This broad spectrum of information enabled physicians to address the complex needs of their patients. It was not until World War II when:

profound changes in medical education and medical practice [took place]. The military recognized physicians who had some evidence of specialty expertise (with or without board certification); they were assigned to specialty care and were given higher military ranks than general practitioners. (Dalen and Ryon 766)

Specialty care may be effective, especially when used in emergency cases for sudden wounds, but specialists are not fully equipped to diagnose underlying conditions of chronic disease. Long-term illnesses often are not isolated to specific parts of the body, even though the illness may predominantly manifest itself in a particular area. Many conventional practitioners “treat each symptom separately, [holistic medicine] looks at the whole picture – at the individual as a whole being” (Kerns). Medical specialization takes a part of the body out of context and thus only scratches the surface when it comes to diagnosing disease. Since the health of each body part is contingent upon the health of its neighboring members, disease often is linked to multiple bodily impairments, whether they be physical, mental, or spiritual.

This is where specialty care fails to address disease effectively. The root cause of an illness will not show itself in an isolated area; multiple factors take part in producing disease. Specialists can only go so far until they exhaust all their treatment options in caring for a specific part of the body. There must be an alternative way to diagnose and treat disease in a more efficient manner. Unlike the limited explanations and treatments of specialization, holistic medicine offers a plethora of solutions to disease because it “maintains that the body, mind, and spirit are inseparable, interdependent, and should all be considered in the course of patient care”

(Mariano 24). Overall health can be attained only when the whole body is addressed because each part is interrelated.

Point 1:

Over the past century, conventional medicine has steered away from focusing on disease, and instead simply addresses symptoms. There is a lack of understanding among conventional practitioners between treating symptoms and treating disease. Conventional medicine treats a symptom as a disease itself rather than a warning sign pointing to a deeper, underlying issue. Conventional doctors tend to address that which is concrete and palpable. Symptoms are easy to observe and identify as they are the physical indications of disease. Thus conventional medicine is geared mainly towards addressing and reducing symptoms, not necessarily disease. Dr. Robert Mendelsohn, a former conventional practitioner, testifies from personal experience that “doctors are not trained to attack the core of any problem, [but] merely to suppress the symptoms” (Mendelsohn 109). The main goal of conventional medicine is not necessarily to eradicate disease, but to provide immediate relief to nagging symptoms in the most convenient manner. Drugs fulfill this goal perfectly. With the technological and scientific advancements over the past several decades, conventional medicine has produced a host of drugs for every symptom imaginable. Yes, these drugs can absolve pain and suppress external signs of inflammation, but covering up symptoms will not cure any underlying diseases. Symptoms are uncomfortable for a reason. A patient experiences excruciating pains for a reason. Trying to simply numb pain with a drug is like covering a person’s mouth who is crying out for help. Drugs actually may cause further injury because they are muffling the body’s warning mechanisms for disease. How can a patient know if their condition is getting worse if a drug covers up the symptoms? Numbing one symptom in a part of the body will only force a different symptom to emerge elsewhere. Drugs

temporarily alleviate pain and discomfort, but these kinds of drugs are not actually healing anything. They are simply numbing, suppressing, and covering up the signs that are pointing to the unresolved issue within the body.

Most drugs are not only a useless solution for disease, they also can hinder the body's healing process. Dr. Chadwick C. Prodromos, Medical Director of the Illinois Orthopaedic Foundation, shows how *NSAIDs*, non-steroidal anti-inflammatory medications, "slow the healing of broken bones, damaged ligaments, and other tissues. If the body is trying to heal damage, NSAIDs can significantly impede progress and lengthen the healing time" (Prodromos). Drugs interfere with the body's natural chemistry, leaving it poorly equipped to heal. According to scientific data from animal studies, "NSAIDs, which inhibit COX-2, can impair fracture healing due to the inhibition of the endochondral ossification" (Geusens), the process of the bone formation in which cartilage scaffolds are gradually replaced by bone. These anti-inflammatory drugs are not just blocking pain, they are also hindering the body's natural process to repair cartilage and bone.

Conventional doctors prescribe NSAIDs without second thought to finding more natural medicines that do not cause adverse side effects. Over extended periods of time, drugs can do more damage than the damage caused by the disease. Dr. Mendelsohn reveals how prescribing these drugs has become a matter of simply suppressing symptoms, rather than curing disease: "Somehow, somewhere, someone has convinced enough people that taking these drugs is the only way [to cure disease]. And someone has, of course, also failed to alert a lot of people to the side effects of these drugs" (Mendelsohn 29). NSAIDs are liable to cause headaches, dizziness, nausea, stomach ulcers, heart attacks, kidney failure, and strokes (Hecht). Despite these extremely disturbing side effects, pharmaceutical companies keep producing NSAIDs because

they immediately suppress a patient's symptoms while making billions of dollars. There is little to no profit for doctors or pharmaceutical companies to consider a patient's diet or lifestyle as a potential cause of disease.

Specifically, high blood pressure has become increasingly common over the past few decades. The holistic approach of lowering high blood pressure is to make either a lifestyle or diet change. This is the best long-term solution as it addresses the root cause of high blood pressure: stress factors, food intolerances, and the like. But conventional doctors still prescribe Antihypertensive drugs that temporarily lower blood pressure because they make more money than taking the holistic approach.

Why would doctors take the time to help their patients alter their lifestyle or diet if prescribing a long list of drugs can temporarily numb the pain and add a zero to the month's paycheck? There are better, holistic solutions for disease but pharmaceutical companies and conventional doctors know that drugs will make more money. Conventional medicine has turned into a money-making business, not about a patient's long-term health. Most drugs do not eradicate disease; they keep patients coming back for more because numbing symptoms does not solve any root issues.

Point 2:

If drugs are an inadequate treatment for disease, what is the alternative? Dr. Mendelsohn explains that "quite a few drugs are invented and prescribed for conditions which can be treated perfectly well with less dangerous methods" (Mendelsohn 29). Holistic medicine does not just treat symptoms, it uses symptoms to ultimately treat the underlying disease. How is this achieved? In order to identify the root cause of a disease, the mental, physical, and spiritual state of the body must be evaluated. Holistic care can form a more comprehensive diagnosis and

treatment for the body's condition because it takes into account the effects of a patient's lifestyle and environment.

Diet is the first thing to address on the physical level in holistic care. This is the most logical place to start when addressing disease since food either fuels or destroys the human body. The health of every cell depends on the nutrients it receives. In conventional medicine, most patients are simply prescribed a long list of drugs that many times do not provide any form of nutrients. The body is not receiving the tools it needs to heal itself when drugs are simply numbing pain. But God created the perfect tools for the body to heal itself; these are found in the human diet. When God created the earth He said to man:

See, I have given you every herb that yields seed which is on the face of all the earth, and every tree whose fruit yields seed; to you it shall be for food. Also, to every beast of the earth, to every bird of the air, and to everything that creeps on the earth, in which there is life, I have given every green herb for food"; and it was so. (Gen. 1.29-30)

Dismissing the fact that herbs, plants, and other foods are forms of medicine is to dismiss the means God created for the human body to thrive on. He developed a comprehensive variety of edible plants that supply the human body with every vitamin, mineral, and nutrient that it needs to survive. Edible plants have specific medicinal properties that nourish certain body parts. God designed the human body with the ability to heal itself predominantly by means of nutrient dense foods. Consequently on a physical level, the existence of disease is always linked to some kind of nutrient deficiency.

In conventional healthcare, many doctors do not consider a patient's diet as a potential cause of disease. The conventional logic behind modern medicine proceeds as follows: if a patient's symptoms do not manifest themselves in the digestive system, the patient's diet most

likely cannot have anything to do with the disease. But the fact is that all disease is affected in one way or another by the quality of one's diet. Despite a body part's location, if the body as a whole is not getting the correct nutrients to ward off disease, there is an issue with the patient's diet. It is a fact that seventy percent of immune cells are found in the gut (Fields). The immune system wards off disease in every part of the body; if it does not get the right nutrients, every part of the body will be negatively affected in some way, shape, or form. Food is either a catalyst promoting disease or a fighter of disease. By ignoring this fundamental truth, conventional medical care is only exacerbating the already rampant rise of disease. If conventional practitioners desire to heal their patients in the most effective manner, they should first address what their patients are consuming on a regular basis.

Holistic care does not question whether diet plays a role in disease; it is a fact that diet always affects health. Holistic care does not skirt around the issue by prescribing temporal, painkiller medication; it cuts to the chase by addressing the underlying issue: what food is fueling the body and what food is destroying the body? In order for humans to make progress in reaching their best physical and spiritual state, they must start by strictly consuming a nutrient dense diet. This is not a new, unscientific phenomenon. Specific herbs and spices have been healing disease and promoting health for thousands of years. Using food for medicinal purposes was the most effective healing method throughout world history up until the nineteenth century (Stannard 51; Jouanna 1). Holistic medicine should not be dismissed as unscientifically proven. Recent research confirms the benefits of using herbs for their medicinal properties:

studies show that polyphenols in herbs help combat such diseases as cancer, heart disease, Alzheimer's, diabetes and more. Polyphenols are anti-microbial, so they can help protect from harmful bacteria as well. (Krieger)

Herbs and spices provide the body with an array of tools which help fight disease. Current research indicates that

Alzheimer's disease is accompanied by a drop in the level of acetylcholine, a chemical messenger in the brain. Sage inhibits the breakdown of acetylcholine. In a 4-month study of 42 individuals with mild to moderate Alzheimer's disease, sage extract was shown to produce significant improvements in brain function. Other studies have also shown that sage can improve memory function in healthy people, both young and old. (Perry; Tildesley)

Other herbs such as rosemary and peppermint fight against allergies, nasal congestion, and nausea. A study involving 29 individuals "both 50 and 200 mg doses of Rosmarinic acid [an active ingredient in rosemary] were shown to suppress allergy symptoms. The number of immune cells in nasal mucus also decreased, with reduced congestion" (Takano). Instead of taking conventional allergy medicines containing antihistamines that cause side effects including "nausea, vomiting, insomnia, dizziness, elevated blood pressure, restlessness, anxiety, headache, urinary dysfunction, and stroke", herbs like rosemary naturally fight allergies and congestion without causing unnecessary side effects (Malone). If herbs and spices have the ability to prevent and heal disease, why do conventional doctors primarily rely on drugs that many times only suppress symptoms and cause negative side effects? Herbs and spices should be utilized as a form of medicine more often as they have the ability to heal underlying conditions without creating other complications.

Using food as a form of medicine was a common practice even in the ancient world. Georg Ebers, a German Egyptologist and novelist, discovered the oldest Egyptian medical document in the world during his stay in Egypt during the winter of 1872-73. From the calendar

dates on the back of the Egyptian document, “Ebers fixed the [composition] of the papyrus in the years of 1553-1550 BC” (Finlayson). On this ancient papyrus, Egyptians wrote how to treat “diseases of the organs, particularly disorders of the stomach...and also of the construction of the human body” (Finlayson). The first few columns on the papyrus addressed how to cure digestive ailments by means of varying herbs and spices. It is interesting that even the Egyptians, thousands of years ago, recognized the importance of the health of the stomach. The emphasis on the stomach on the papyrus shows that the Egyptians understood that all disease is affected by what the body consumes. These men of the ancient world were not ignorant of the correlation between the quality of one’s diet and disease. They knew that whatever ails the body can be treated first by natural means: altering the human diet according to its deficiencies.

These Egyptians, who understood and practiced the meticulous, lengthy process of mummification, used holistic forms of medicine to cure disease. If they were able to obtain the knowledge of how to preserve the flesh of a dead body, how much more could they have understood the preservation of a living human body? An ancient form of medicine should not be disqualified simply due to its age. Conventional medicine has developed phenomenal surgical equipment and other technological equipment, but ancient men and women understood and mastered the natural world in a way that has been lost today.

Not only was holistic medicine used by the early Egyptians, “confirmation of the richness of Egypt’s medicinal plants is also verified by the mention in Graeco-Roman medical literature of products originating from Egypt that are used to make medicines” (Jouanna 9). If these holistic healing methods were passed down carefully all the way from the Egyptians to the Greeks and Romans, this speaks to holistic medicine’s validity. It clearly healed, otherwise it would have been thrown out of Greco-Roman medical care. Ancient Greek physicians knew that

“the balance or loss of balance among the constituents of the body [depended] upon the diet...the physician's main concern [was] to prescribe the proper nourishment” (Tracy 27). Again, great emphasis was put on what the patient consumed.

Point 3:

Simply addressing the diet is only a small aspect of holistic medicine. Health is not merely obtained by altering what is physically consumed. The emotional state of the body affects health just as much as the physical state. Even though emotions are not visible or tangible, they still have a significant impact on the body. Emotions such as stress and anxiety are common factors in exacerbating disease. Chronic stress, or long-lasting stress, especially wreaks havoc on the body. When the body is in a constant state of stress, the hypothalamic pituitary adrenal axis system, also known as HPA, is severely damaged. Dr. Denée Thomas Mwendwa, a Psychology Professor, explains how

the hypothalamus [gland is] the command center that is ultimately responsible for the release of hormones. These hormones eventually make their way down to the adrenal glands at the top of our kidneys and release the stress hormone cortisol. Cortisol helps mobilize the body to produce the energy needed to meet the demands of stress. (79)

But when chronic stress is not addressed, the body becomes overwhelmed by the constant production of cortisol. This negatively affects the performance of the adrenal glands which help regulate the metabolism, immune system, blood pressure, and other essential functions. This is where conventional medicine falls short in addressing the emotional well-being of a patient. Oftentimes conventional doctors do not consider stress as a factor of disease because this requires them to take a holistic approach. Stress cannot be observed in a scan or removed through surgery. Instead, conventional doctors simply prescribe drugs such as ketoconazole,

mitotane, and metyrapone which reduce the body's production of cortisol. But these drugs come with side effects such as blurred vision, problems with speech, nausea, loss of appetite, depression, skin rashes, and dizziness among other negative results (Mitotane).

Such drugs are not the optimal solution for stress as they do not eradicate the outside causes of mental and emotional stress in a person's lifestyle. Stress is a response mechanism pointing to a deeper issue. The patient could be putting unnecessary stress on their body through high caffeine intake or immoderate amounts of alcohol, living in a tense work environment, or getting inadequate sleep. These underlying stressors cannot completely be counteracted simply by a cortisol-suppressing drug. In order to properly deal with stress, health practitioners must take into account the patients' physical and mental strains in their personal life, social life, and overall environment. If these aspects are ignored, chronic stress can spiral out of control.

Not only does stress take a toll on the body, new research gives evidence that negative emotions in general take a toll on the body, specifically on the immune system. Dr. Graham-Engelan, an associate professor at Pennsylvania State University, led a study with other specialists finding "that negative moods may change the way in which the immune response functions, and they are associated with an increased risk of exacerbated inflammation" (Cohut). In this study, the scientists assessed the immune response of participants with diverse ethnic, racial, and socioeconomic backgrounds by collecting blood samples in order to identify signs of inflammation. They observed that

individuals who experienced negative moods several times per day for extended periods of time tended to have higher levels of inflammation biomarkers in their blood. The scientists also [noted] that if they collected blood samples from participants soon after they had experienced a negative emotion such as sadness or anger, inflammation

biomarkers were all the more present in the blood. However, experiencing positive moods — even for a short while before the collection of a blood sample — was associated with lower inflammation levels. (Cohut)

According to this data, emotions are a valid cause of inflammation. This study shows that evaluating the emotional condition of the body is just as important as analyzing the physical condition. Disease and inflammation oftentimes is not only caused by poor physical health. Emotional trauma also plays a significant role in creating inflammation and exacerbating disease. In order to form a comprehensive diagnosis and treatment for disease, health practitioners must consider a patient's emotional state as well as their physical state.

Acupuncture is one modality of holistic medicine which addresses physical and emotional discord within the body. Acupuncture involves the insertion of very thin needles through the skin at strategic pressure points on the body. Each pressure point correlates with a specific organ or system within the body. Inserting the needles “sends a signal through the nervous system to the brain, where chemicals such as endorphins, norepinephrine, and enkephalin are released. Some of these substances are 10 to 200 times more potent than morphine” (Griffin; Regan; Gaydos). These small wounds stimulate chemical reactions within the body which counteract the effects of negative emotions. Research shows that acupuncture alleviates stress and depression symptoms by releasing endorphins, the body's own natural painkillers, and improving the circulation of blood and lymphatic fluids which bring fresh oxygen to body tissues. Acupuncture also decreases the stress hormone cortisol, lowers blood pressure, reduces the heart rate, and relaxes muscle tissue. (Zablaki)

This form of holistic medicine addresses the emotional as well as the physical needs of the body. It increases blood flow to specific areas of the body in order to promote healing. It also works with the body's chemistry, releasing endorphins to help deal with emotional and physical pain.

Suggestion & Analysis:

If disease is not addressed on a spiritual, emotional, mental, and physical level, a patient's health cannot thrive. Since each of these parts affect the other, they can hinder each other from healing completely. Conventional medicine is helpful for emergency care and sudden wounds, but its treatments lack in preventative care and chronic disease. Many drugs prescribed by conventional doctors simply alleviate symptoms. These drugs seem effective because they temporarily suppress a patient's pain, but they do not actually fight the underlying cause of that pain. This is not a productive treatment that promotes long-term health. In order to obtain health, medical treatments need to address the cause of the underlying disease. Disease begins from spiritual, emotional, mental, or physical discord in the body. Medical practitioners must have an extensive understanding of how these parts function together as a whole in order to properly address disease. With this knowledge, they can form a more comprehensive understanding of what is causing a disease and how to best treat it.

Conclusion:

When diagnosing and treating disease, medical practitioners ought to evaluate the whole body. The spiritual, emotional, and mental parts of the body are just as important as the physical parts when one pursues health. When medical practitioners do not treat their patients accordingly, they cannot eradicate disease efficiently. Even though emotions and thoughts are not tangible, they still have a positive or negative effect on the body. If medical practitioners do not address negative thoughts and emotions, the body cannot heal properly. There may be great

physical improvements, but emotional and mental instability will continue to hinder the patient's healing. Man is not simply a physical being with a set of instincts like animals. Man has multiple layers of consciousness. God created man to be a rational being with the ability to think, have desires and passions, and take action. If God created man with this range of capabilities, why would health be limited to merely physical wellbeing? Holistic medicine promotes the ultimate state of health by extensively evaluating and treating the spiritual, emotional, mental, and physical parts of the human body.

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