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Research Question – Essay 4

### Organic Medicine: A Healthier Lifestyle

It is scary to think about a person that is on numerous prescription medications. How are all those prescription medications affecting his or her health? A recent report in the journal of the American Medical Association said that "adverse drug reactions are believed to be the leading cause of death in the United States" (qtd. in Duke par. 2). Every other commercial on television recently is about a lawsuit related to the side effects of a random medication. In addition to this, there are prescription medications available now that are solely to counteract the side effects of another medication. Organic medicine can provide more economical and other benefits, safer and more effective health care remedies, and far less side effects than traditional medicine.

There are many benefits to using organic medicine. However, one of the benefits of using organic medicine is the cost. It is much cheaper to use an organic medicine than it is to use prescription medicine. Organic medicine is the base of where traditional, prescription medicine comes from. Pharmaceutical companies start out with the organic herbs. Then, they add other ingredients to the medicine until they are able to put their own patent on the medicine. It is then sold to the public at a higher price. Another benefit of using organic medicines is that each one of them can treat more than one health condition at a time. For example, Ginkgo Biloba, otherwise known as Ginkgo, not only provides support for circulatory disorders, but it also helps enhance memory (staff, Veria par. 10).

Marketed as an herb for improving memory and mental agility, ginkgo biloba has been found to improve cognitive and social functioning in people with mild to moderate dementia. The anti-dementia effects are similar to that of prescription drugs used for treating dementia. Another positive finding has been as a treatment for mountain sickness--improving peripheral vascular circulation and tolerance of altitude. (Felix 47)

Most prescription medicines are only designed to treat one ailment at a time which leads to more costs to consumers. For example, Cardizem is a blood pressure medication that used solely to control blood pressure. However, often people who have blood pressure problems also have problems with edema. Therefore, they will also need to take a diuretic medication to relieve fluid that builds up in the body. More often than not, people with blood pressure problems also have high cholesterol which requires yet another medication. Can you see how the costs can add up? There are single organic medications that can treat all of these issues on their own. Using alternative health remedies can also be beneficial in more ways than just economically.

Not only are organic medications more economical to use, there are countless health remedies that they can provide. Some of these remedies include: cardiovascular diseases, digestive problems, respiratory problems, depression, skin problems, and various cancers. Garlic is the most extensively studied medicinal herb; garlic's beneficial effects are still unclear. It is popularly used as an anti-hypertensive and anti-atherosclerotic agent, and some trials have shown this to be the case (Felix 47). It can also boost the immune system, as well as aid in digestion. Echinacea is good for the respiratory system, colds, flu, and infection prevention. "the results are still inconclusive. However, the evidence does suggest a possible supportive role in treating infections and wounds. [ . . . ] Echinacea is also being investigated as a possible anti-

cancer agent” (Felix 47). Flaxseed balances health for skin, hair, nails, digestion, and other things. Feverfew can help remedy migraine headaches, other aches and pains, arthritis, and other inflammatory conditions. Furthermore, Feverfew is currently being investigated as an anti-arthritic (Felix 47). Black Cohosh is useful for PMS, menopausal symptoms, and insomnia. Dandelion can be used as an appetite stimulant for people with cancer and undergoing radiation therapy, among other things. Research has shown that St. John’s Wort can treat mild to moderate depression. It is also being investigated for use as an anti-cancer and anti-viral drug (including for use against HIV) (Felix 47). This list goes on and on. There are numerous options for maintaining one’s health using organic medications. Another draw to alternative medicine is its focus on prevention. Whereas traditional medicine tends to intervene once disease is present, many types of alternative medicine . . . focus on preventing disease before it occurs [. . .] (Calabro par. 6). It just requires a little research, persistence, and patience to decide on what is needed and useful on an individual basis.

Moreover, one can count on fewer side effects from using organic medicine. However, no medicine, organic or otherwise, is going to be without some potential side effects. One must consider all of his or her options in this regard. Although the side effects are fewer with organic medications, they can still trigger allergic reactions in certain instances, can interact with other medications, and they are not regulated by the Federal Drug and Food Administration. The best advice for a people considering the use of organic medications is to discuss everything their physician and make a decision that is right for them.

Overall, organic medication can provide wonderful and beneficial alternatives to traditional medicine for a variety of reasons including the ones mentioned previously. It is more or less a personal choice. Whether it is for the economic benefits, health advantages, or because

of fewer side effects, organic medicine is at least another health care alternative for the consumer to consider. It is one more way for people to take back control of their own lives and health.

Ideally, this is what everyone wants to do.

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