

Do Not Go to Naturopathic Doctors?

by Dr. Michael Lonardo, PscD, TND

Do not use Naturopathic Doctors—they are quacks! That is often the cry from doctors of Western Medicine (traditional doctors of medicine). However, what most MDs or DOs won't admit is that traditional medicine often treats only the symptoms—they often do not take the time to seek out the root cause of your health issue. For example, if you are diagnosed with anxiety, the MD will usually prescribe Prozac. Then when the most common side effects of this drug present themselves (nausea and upset stomach) the MD will prescribe another medication like Phenergan (Promethazine) or Zofran (Ondansetron), still making little or no effort to ascertain why you have anxiety.

Anxiety has many causes. Situational, genetic, chemical, environmental, nutritional and even allergic reactions can present as anxiety. All potential causes need to be examined. Naturopaths do just that. We examine your entire being. We look at your history, family history and current situation and we discuss with you what needs to be changed to help you. In fact, your initial consultation with me is two hours or longer - and I don't mean sitting in the waiting room for your overdue appointment. I mean actual time in consultation. Incidentally, we schedule with your time in mind and do not overbook our schedule. Simply stated; we operate on schedule.

The methods of naturopathic medicine (often referred to as alternative medicine) have been around for thousands of years while traditional medicine only began in the 19th century. The World Health Organization estimates that between 60 and 85 percent of the world's population rely on holistic medicine as their primary form

of health care. In the USA that number is about 33%. This is a startling fact considering that medical errors are the third leading cause of death in America!

There is a place for traditional physicians. In an emergency situation you would not want to go to a Naturopath, you would want to go to the emergency department. However, if you are looking for preventative or restorative care, naturopathic methods are far superior. Areas of particular interest to me are anxiety, depression, mood disorders, panic disorders, postpartum depression, weight issues, nutrition and autism.

A new government survey suggests that 1 in 45 children ages 3 through 17 have been diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder. Traditional medicine has failed the needs of these children. There is no standard course of treatment for autism. To me, each client represents a new and exciting opportunity to help someone that has been written off by today's standard medical treatments. Naturopaths address the three systems of the body that are compromised in autism - the central nervous system, the digestive system and the immune system. All three work in unison and must be treated together. Treating less is simply a recipe for failure.

Postpartum depression is another area where traditional medicine often falls short. Some OBGYN's will simply prescribe SSRI's (selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors). The fact is many postpartum depression cases are a direct result of a hormone and/or chemical imbalance, neither of which are usually considered. Simply prescribing SSRI's will usually result in either a life-time of SSRI prescrip-

tions or the condition developing into full blown depression. It saddens me that the first course of action for most physicians is their prescription pad. They have many other resources at their disposal.

When a client presents with anxiety, depression, mood disorders, panic disorders, or postpartum depression, I order a neurotransmitter test and hormone panel. Neurotransmitters are chemical messengers used by the nervous system to relay information from one nerve to another. The fact that 16 million Americans have experienced at least one major depressive episode or experienced depressive symptoms (NIMH 2014) means this test is invaluable. Once we receive the laboratory test results we then decide on a course of action. We will not burden the client with unnecessary costs or supplements.

When we determine a protocol, we also look at all facets of an individual's life. An example would be to have them eliminate grain and gluten from their diet and add a magnesium supplement, omega fatty acids, and essential nutrients, vitamins and minerals. In addition, one of the best treatments for anyone is exercise. We strongly encourage all clients to begin exercising—even if at the beginning it is a five minute walk—that's a start.

I cannot stress enough that there is a place for traditional medicine. However, if you want to restore your health or simply be proactive in the prevention of disease, you need to consider an approach that addresses your entire body and the root causes of your symptoms. It is essential to your good health.

See ad on page 25.

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