

TRADITIONAL BELIEFS AND PRACTICES DURING POSTPARTUM AMONGST MALAY WOMEN

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Abstract

Introduction: Postpartum period is a critical adjustment period for woman and her newborn physiologically, emotionally and socially. It is a time when the woman's behaviour could be influenced by their cultural background.

Aim: This study aimed to explore the traditional beliefs and practices during postpartum among the Malay women.

Method: A descriptive qualitative study was conducted in Sungai Petai, Malacca. The participants were selected by using a purposive sampling. In-depth interviews were used. Data collected were analysed manually. Saturation was reached at the ninth participant.

Findings: The findings revealed that (1) Malay women believed the confinement period as a healing period after delivery, (2) they were *kotor* (dirty) after delivery, and (3) they believed that they are susceptible to *bentan* (getting ill) and (4) *meroyan* (postpartum psychosis). Most of the participants strictly abide by the traditional practices.

Conclusion: This study showed that postpartum mothers practised traditional beliefs during their confinement. It is suggested to do further studies which involve different ethnic groups and different settings.

Keywords: postpartum care, traditional beliefs, practices, confinement, *meroyan*