

EXPERIENCE OF MOTHERS LEARNING AND DOING INFANT MASSAGE

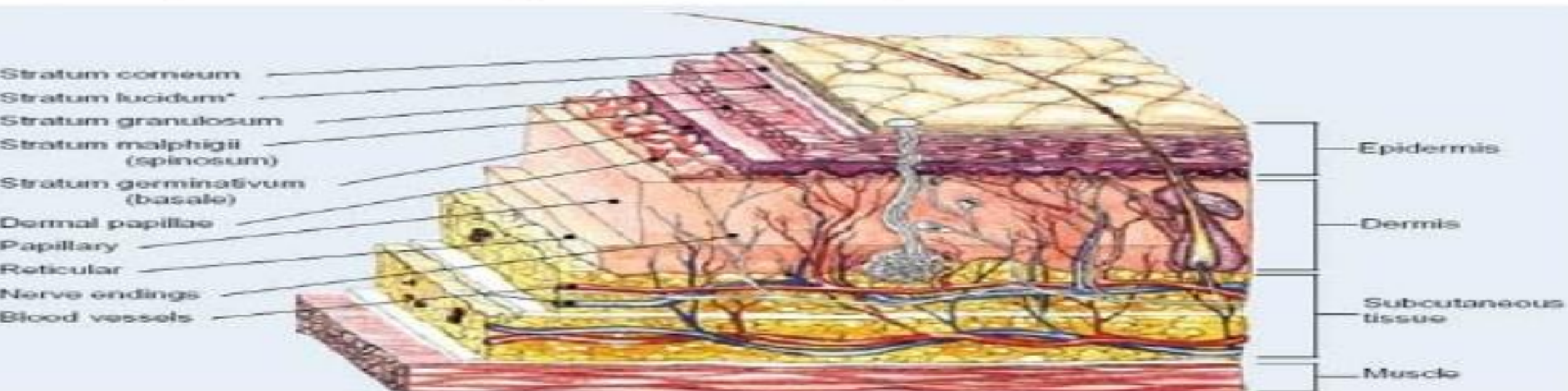
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Skin

- Our largest organ
- Its area is about 2 square meters and weighs 4.5-5kg (10-11 lb)
- Accounts for 16% of body weight
- Largest sense organ in the body



TOUCH/ SKIN-TO SKIN CONTACT

- Undervalued and neglected –
- 6-week-old fetus responds to touch before eyes and ears are developed;
- Skin- largest sensory organ; impulses from the skin get conducted to CNS – effect functioning of all body's support system (Suzanne Adamson, 1993)

Infant massage

- Way of providing **nurturing touch** – practised in many traditional cultures in Asia and Africa, a natural part of child rearing passed down through the generations of mothers (IAIM, 2005)

Nurturing touch through infant massage – for which infants?

- All infants;
- Infants who are premature; disabilities; born by Caesarian section – particularly valuable (Suzanne, 1993);
- During hospitalization - babies experienced pain and discomfort due to medical procedure, IM as a loving, comforting encounter (Juliana Dellinger-Bavolek, N.D).

Infant massage....

‘Through loving touch in infancy the natural human need to be recognized, valued and loved is met, giving the individual a lasting sense of security & self-worth (heini, psychiatrist, n.D).

*‘Feeding babies with touches, giving food to their skins and their backs, is just as important as filling their stomachs’
(leboyer, 1977)*

Infant massage...

- The teaching of mothers about baby massage is relatively new in the local context.
- Some service provision noted in the private clinic or hospital,
- Not presently included in the government maternal and child health clinics.

- weight gain for premature babies,
- relaxation,
- relief from abdominal discomfort and colic,
- stimulation for babies

relaxation to mothers.

Benefits of baby massage

(Abdallah, Badr & Hawwari, 2013; Bal Yilmaz and Conk, 2009; Underdown, Barlow, Chung & Stewart-Brown, 2006).

Part of an ongoing comparative cohort study which examines infant massage and its influence on the maternal-child attachment, babies' sleep and the breastfeeding outcome.


Mothers with babies between 4-6 weeks old - recruited from the selected maternal and child health clinics.

- Those assigned to the study group were invited to attend the four weekly sessions of the adapted infant massage program, guided by a certified infant massage instructor (Mcclure & IAIM Circle of trainers, 2015).



Objectives of study

To explore mothers' experience with learning and doing infant massage.



Method

Design -an explorative, qualitative approach;

- Semi-structured questions were used to guide the face-to-face interviews.

Sample and setting - participants from within two selected government maternal and child health clinics locally.

- Without any major health concerns, with no prior experience of infant massage and were still breast feeding;
- Babies did not suffer from severe medical or surgical conditions or any syndromic features or prematurity.
- Completed the four small-group infant massage sessions (of 45 minutes to an hour) at weekly interval; had been doing the baby massage with their babies at home.

- **Ethical consideration-** approval of faculty ethic committee; medical research ethics committee and director of the sarawak health department & informed consent from the participants;
- **Data collection-** semi-structured interview guide with open-ended questions with prompts;
- **Data management and data analysis-** translated verbatim transcripts verified by a multi-lingual language expert analysed thematically;
- **Reflexivity-** as paediatric nurse and certified infant massage instructor, researcher role in analyzing data could be biased (fraenkel & wallen, 1993).

Mothers' background characteristics

Characteristics (N=9)	n(%)		n(%)
Maternal age (years) Mean =26.6 (SD=3.24); Range (21 – 30)			
Ethnicities		Transport Availability	
Malay	6 (66.7)	Mobile with own transport	1(11.1)
Chinese	1(11.1)	Depend on husband	8(88.9)
Iban	2 (22.2)		
Marital status		Household Income	
Married	9 (100.0)	<RM 1000	4(44.4)
Single	0 (0)	RM 1000 - RM 2000	3(33.3)
		> RM 2000	2(22.2)
Highest educational level		Number of children	
Primary education	4 (44.4)	1st child	6(66.7)
Secondary education	5 (55.6)	2nd child	3(33.3)
Employment Status			
Employed	3(33.3)		
Unemployed	6(66.7)		

Themes and sub-themes:

Experience with baby

- More relaxed and better sleep
- Mother-baby bonding

New learnings

- A helpful baby-care skill
- Responding to baby's cues,
- Establishing a new baby-care routine

Gaining supports

- Spousal support
- Peer support from other mothers

**MAJOR THEME 1: EXPERIENCE WITH BABY:
MORE RELAXED AND BETTER SLEEP**

“I like to see baby comfortable, his sleep is more soundly... before this he often woke up” (Malia).

“After the massage, baby will go to sleep...if I do the massage in the evening, he will sleep till early morning” (Marina).

MAJOR THEME 1: experience with baby: Baby-mother bonding

“ I get more attached to the baby; because when I did the massage with baby, I talked to baby and have eye contact with him... felt the bonding is there” (lina). (Observed her baby smiled and appeared to interact with mother, cooing; both baby and mother appeared happy).



Major theme 2: NEW LEARNINGS

A helpful baby-care skill

“A lot of air came out, ‘poo-poo’ (imitate sound of passing flatus) a lot after the massage on the abdomen... sometimes half way through the massage also; it is good” (lina). “After I have changed her diapers, I massaged her... sure can hear the sound of air (flatus) comes out...when baby kept crying... seems having air in the stomach...it is good for me that I have learned baby massage... I can help baby (relieve baby’s discomfort)” (Selinda).



After i have bathed him and massaged with baby, he will sure to pass flatus and defecate... very, very useful...for my baby and myself...it’s a loss if i didn’t come to the class and learn” (Latifah)



Major Theme 2: New Learnings

Responding To Baby's Cues



RESPONDING TO BABY'S CUES

“Learning to adjust to baby’s timing- if he cried, I have to attend to his needs, calm him first; if he slept, I have to wait for him to wake up then only can do the massage” (Lina). “I would do (massage baby) 10 minutes for one session... if he cried then I stop...or cried when he wants milk” (Latifah).

“Sometimes baby refused, see his mood; i would stop; maybe he wanted milk, sleep or not comfortable; already know his cue” (Malia).



MAJOR THEME 2: NEW LEARNINGS

Establishing a new baby-care routine

ESTABLISHING A NEW BABY-CARE ROUTINE

“I would massage baby in the morning and evening; morning 10 am after bathing; if evening at 5 pm, after bathing (Marina).

“I would do the massage in the evening...he is awake for longer time; morning he will be sleeping a lot. I may be able to do baby massage on the weekend, early morning or after back from work when I start back to work later (Malia).

“I try my best to do the baby massage when i start work again. It is becoming a care routine now (Lin).

Major Theme 3: Gaining Supports:

Peer supports from other mothers

*“I can meet with other mothers whom I have not met before
(Liza).*

As mother Selinda elaborated, “the best thing is... able to meet new people...other babies, exchange experience”. “I could get to know other mothers, met their babies who are all different; I asked them about breast feeding; this is my first time (having baby); I asked those mothers who have more kids about their experience, how they take care of children and all that... (Latifah).

“Feel happy to be together with new friends (Irene)

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❑ Major theme 3: Gaining supports: spousal support

My older child is quite active, concerned he would disturb baby; my husband would help to look after the older child while I did baby massage (Lina).

“My husband also took part in doing baby massage (note: mother’s laughter, excited, her tone of voice raised) ... After I bathed baby, he did the massage; he can remember the steps ...I still need to refer to the handout (laughed); he is good; can do the massage with my elder child who is one year four months old... at the same time when I did the massage with my baby (Selinda)



Babies' relaxation and better sleep is associated with the reduced stress-related hormone cortisol and the increased relaxing hormone oxytocin in the body with mothers' nurturing touch (Underdown, et al., 2010).

Through touch and massage to nurture and communicate love to babies is the focus of the International Association of Infant Massage (Sylvie, 2015).

Fathers' participation in baby massage could contribute towards father-infant interaction and bonding;

The group setting was regarded as beneficial, with learning beyond that of baby massage strokes as it promotes an informal socio-emotional support especially to the first-time mothers (Sylvie, 2015).

CONCLUSION:

- Findings of positive experience supplement the existing evidence base which could influence future practice with potential inclusion of infant massage program as part of the maternal and child care service.
- It could play a meaningful supporting role for the well-being of mothers and their babies.

