



**POSTPARTUM PRACTICES OF
TRADITIONAL HMONG WOMEN**
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OBJECTIVES

- o To be able to allow other professionals who are working with traditional postpartum Hmong women to understand what their practices are to better aide with the transition
- o To explain postpartum practices from an experience point of view
- o To acknowledge that there are slight differences in how one adheres to a practice versus another



SKIN TO SKIN

- o Not practiced very often by older generations due to lack of knowledge
 - Older generation vs. more Westernized generation
- o Rest
 - Only light duty (cooking and watching children) after 10 days postpartum (Liamputtong Rice, 2000; Liamputtong, 2009)



PLACENTA

- o Traditional
 - Burial of placenta in house
 - Allows the person's spirit to go back to where he/she was born after he/she dies to allow him/her to safely pass to the spirit world (Halvorson, 2012)
- o Westernized
 - Not many patients bring home their placentas

BREAST MILK VS BOTTLE FEEDING

<ul style="list-style-type: none">o Breast milk<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Unknown colostrum benefits<ul style="list-style-type: none">o Color and consistency of colostrum effects how women believe milk is bado Colostrum ("first milk") is ONLY after first birth (Liamputtong, 2011)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">o Bottle<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Seems to the norm due to the westernized culture of convenience<ul style="list-style-type: none">o WIC (Halvorson, 2012)• Believed to be better than breast milk due to formula was too expensive
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FUNDAL MESSAGES

- o Westernized fundal massages versus tradition
 - Fundal massages tend to be more forceful and painful here in the US
 - "Massage is also employed to help rid the body of any remaining blood and placenta...a medicine woman may perform this" or an elder woman (Liamputtong Rice, 2000)
- o Abdominal binding
 - To help the uterus shrink and keep the stomach flat vs. bulging and loose; bring abdomen back to normal shape (Liamputtong Rice, 2000; Liamputtong, 2009)

WARM/HOT VS. COLD

- o Warm/Hot
 - "All women emphasized the importance of dressing appropriately with warm clothes, having 'socks and shoes on,' and 'wearing something around the head, especially around the ears.'" (Jambunathan, *Clin Nurs Res* 1995)
 - o Hat/towel around the head
 - o Warm clothing
- o NO cold water; only warm to hot water
 - Bathing, washing hands, etc.
 - o Can cause complications when older if cold water is used or touched

NUTRITION/DIET

- o 30-day Chicken and Rice diet
 - Boiled chicken with herbs and chicken broth
 - Rice
 - NO other meats
- o Hot/Warm water ONLY
 - Cold foods and drink is seen as causing the blood to clot (Liamputtong Rice, 2000; Liamputtong, 2009)
 - o Examples of cold foods: green vegetables and fresh fruits

VISITATION PRACTICES

- o Cannot visit another Hmong family
 - Only after the 30-days "nyob nruab hlis" (30 days confinement)
- o Cannot enter through the front door of the house
 - Only side door or back door is approved
- o Pregnant woman vs. new breastfeeding woman

(Liamputtong Rice, 2000; Liamputtong, 2009)

POSTPARTUM RITUALS

- o Jewelry, strings, yarns
 - Wards off bad spirits
 - Binds the soul to the body (Luce et. al, 2011)
- o Lifting up bedding and "calling" the mother and the baby home on day of discharge
 - Ensure mother and baby's spirits are not left behind

WHAT CAN HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONALS DO TO HELP?

- o Understand patient's cultural beliefs and practices
- o Allow patient to direct
- o Honor patient's choice
- o Support patient's desire to practice or not practice the cultural beliefs
- o Educate regarding the importance of fundal massages
 - Allow patient to have an abdominal wrap or belly binder on during fundal massages as needed
- o Inform the patient regarding the importance of breast milk to allow an informed decision
- o Acknowledge the differences in practice from one patient to another

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