OBJECTIVES

- 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
- To explain postpartum practices from an experience point of view
- To acknowledge that there are slight differences in how one adheres to a practice versus another

SKIN TO SKIN

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

**BREAST MILK VS BOTTLE FEEDING**
- **Breast milk**
  - Unknown colostrum benefits
    - Color and consistency of colostrum effects how women believe milk is bad
    - Colostrum ("first milk") is ONLY after first birth (Liamputtong, 2011)
- **Bottle**
  - Seems to the norm due to the westernized culture of convenience
    - WIC (Halvorson, 2012)
  - Believed to be better than breast milk due to formula was too expensive

**FUNDAL MASSAGES**
- **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)
- **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

- 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)
    - Hat/towel around the head
    - Warm clothing
  - NO cold water; only warm to hot water
    - Bathing, washing hands, etc.
      - Can cause complications when older if cold water is used or touched

NUTRITION/DIET

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

VISITATION PRACTICES

- Cannot visit another Hmong family
  - Only after the 30-days “nyob nua hlii” (30 days confinement)
- Cannot enter through the front door of the house
  - Only side door or back door is approved
- Pregnant woman vs. new breastfeeding woman
  (Liamputtong Rice, 2000; Liamputtong, 2009)
POSTPARTUM RITUALS

- Jewelry, strings, yarns
  - Wards off bad spirits
  - Binds the soul to the body (Luce et al., 2011)
- 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?

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

REFERENCES


