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Research paper



Exploring Malaysian Traditional Postpartum Care Practices Among Practitioners

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Abstract

This study explores traditional postpartum care practices among practitioners in Malaysia, focusing on techniques, dietary practices, and the role of education and certification in ensuring effective care. It aims to understand how these practices, deeply rooted in cultural and historical beliefs, contribute to maternal recovery during the postnatal period. The findings reveal that traditional practices, including hot stone compression, postpartum massage, body wrapping, vaginal steam baths, and herbal remedies, are widely utilized to promote healing and restore physical and mental health after childbirth. Dietary practices align with traditional beliefs emphasizing "hot" foods for recovery and modern approaches focusing on balanced nutrition. Practitioners' knowledge, often inherited or formally trained, plays a critical role in maintaining the efficacy and safety of these methods. Certifications such as SKM and DKM ensure professionalism, while modern adaptations like saunas offer safer alternatives to certain traditional techniques. Traditional postpartum care practices in Malaysia significantly aid maternal recovery by integrating cultural wisdom and modern healthcare standards. While these methods remain vital for physical and emotional well-being, further emphasis on formal training and safety enhancements can help sustain their relevance in contemporary healthcare settings. This research discovers traditional postpartum care practices, dietary intake during postpartum, and education and information among practitioners in Klang Valley.

Keywords: *Traditional; Postpartum; Practices; Practitioners.*

1. Introduction

Traditional postpartum care practices in Malaysia are an important part of the postnatal period, which begins immediately after the baby's birth and extends for about six weeks when the mother's body returns to the non-pregnant state. Traditional postpartum care practitioners adhere to a wide range of beliefs, some of which include managing weight loss, using it for aesthetic purposes, enhancing mothers' health and vitality, promoting wound healing, and restoring normal function to the sexual and reproductive organs (Ministry of Health Malaysia, 2015). Most traditional postpartum care practices in Asia aim to restore the balance of the body's components, commonly known as hot fire, dry soil, cold air, and water. Blood is thought of as a "hot" element; thus, for postnatal moms, the blood lost after childbirth is seen as a "cold" element (Abdul-Basir et al., 2018). Three major ethnic groups make Malaysia a multicultural nation: the Malays, Indians, and Chinese. These groups have diverse traditional postnatal care, however, they all have some common values. These communities may have location-specific variations (Fadzil et al., 2016; Mohd Yusoff et al., 2018).

According to Chauhan 2022, women who have recently given birth experience a period of confinement that can range from thirty (30) to forty-four (44) days. They receive postpartum massages, wear body wrap which is corsets or traditional girdles (bengkung), use hot stone compression (bertungku), vaginal steam bath (bertangas), wearing pilis, tapel, and param, take herbal baths, and berdiang or bersalai throughout this period (Fadzil et al., 2016; Sator et al., 2023). Postpartum women must stay at home with their newborns and follow certain rules on what to do, what not to eat, etc. Help from an older family member or another family member can be obtained. The safety and effects of traditional postpartum care in postpartum women have received relatively little research, despite its long history of usage. This is particularly valid for studies carried out in regional contexts (Chauhan, 2022).

According to recent studies, the bidan, or traditional Malay midwife, is crucial to protecting the health and welfare of Malay women. The bidan's midwifery abilities were inherited from her great-grandmother or grandmother and were passed down through the years. Traditional postpartum care typically shows symptoms one to two weeks after a baby is delivered. This guarantees that any stitches used during childbirth or labor have fully recovered to avoid potential issues like wound gaping or infection. It is possible to need sutures during labour or childbirth. The Chinese midwife, sometimes known as a confinement lady, goes by the name Yuet Pui Pok or Pui Yit, an Indian midwife called Marrutuvacci (Sidek, 2021). Using their beliefs and practices as a guide, they perform traditional postpartum care on

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postpartum mothers, intending to warm the woman's body and revitalize it. Traditional postpartum care is administered to recently delivered mothers. They also thought that the blood loss that happened during childbirth caused the body to enter a cold phase (Basir, 2019). However, this study explores the traditional postpartum care practices among practitioners in Malaysia.

2. Literature review

2.1. Traditional postpartum care in Malaysia

2.1.1. Postpartum massage

Traditional Malay medicine is a significant component of postpartum care for mothers. After giving birth, mothers receive a full-body massage and a prenatal massage specifically designed for the breasts and abdomen (MOH, 2017). The therapeutic technique of Malay massage, also known as Urut Melayu, combines kneading, stroking, and pressing movements with herbal oils to activate various bodily systems. Practitioners may use tools like wooden sticks, combs, or horns to assist with the massage process (Institute for Public Health Malaysia, 2015).

After childbirth, deep tissue massage and therapeutic full-body massage are also offered by professional therapists. The practitioner decides which part of the body to massage, starting from the top of the head and ending at the feet. Massage therapy is crucial to speed up blood flow, as women's blood flow slows down after childbirth, leading to body aches and weakness (Mohd Yusoff et al., 2018). Practitioners typically massage with fingers and hands, with some using elbows for thighs and lower body areas (Wan Farzana Fasya et al., 2017). Most practitioners avoid massaging with feet due to the belief that it interferes with the healing process (MOH, 2017). Practitioners often begin by massaging the stomach, followed by the thighs, calf, feet, back, breasts, shoulders, and arms, before finishing at the head.In addition to massage techniques, many practitioners use bertungku, or hot stone compression, which involves wrapping heated stones in herbal leaves to ease muscular tension and increase blood flow (MOH, 2017).

2.1.2. Hot stone compression

Bertungku is a type of massage that uses hot stones or iron to treat postnatal pain (Ministry of Health Malaysia, 2015). In Kelantan, most practitioners practice hot compression treatment starting on the third day after giving birth. The duration of pregnancy varies, with waiting periods usually lasting three days and continuing until the 40th day. For normal births with episiotomy wounds, the treatment is recommended after the wound has healed within seven to ten days (MOH, 2017).

There are three common forms of tungku: stone tungku, iron tungku, and herbal tungku (Mohd Yusoff et al., 2018). The tungku is warmed up using direct heat and wrapped with fabric or cloth to prevent direct heat transfer to the mother's body. A mixture of herbal leaves, such as Alpinia galangal (lengkuas), Morinda citrifolia (mengkudu), Piper betle L. (sirih), and other medicinal herbs may be used as needed (Mohd Yusoff et al., 2018; Sator et al., 2022). Tungku is believed to ease muscle spasms, reduce gastrointestinal bloating, enhance blood circulation, and encourage relaxation. It also dissolves any remaining blood clots in the womb (Ariffin, 2023).While in Indonesia, this treatment is believed to help remove lochia and restore the elasticity of the abdominal skin after childbirth (Mariyati & Tumansery, 2018).

The hot stone is applied directly to various parts of the body, such as the arms, shoulders, thighs, hips, abdominal area, tummy, and feet. An hour to an hour and a half is typically allowed for the hot compress session (Ariffin, 2023). To be more effective, hot stone compression must follow specific rules, starting from the stomach area, followed by the thighs, buttocks, back, calves, and soles of the feet (MOH, 2017).

2.1.3. Body wrapping (berbengkung)

Another form of postpartum care is body wrapping or berbengkung. Similar to the ideas of a body wrap, belly binding, or girdle, the term "bengkung" refers to a particular cloth that is firmly wrapped around a confining mother (Fadzil et al., 2016; Mohd Yusoff et al., 2018). Traditionally, before binding, an herbal paste comprised of particular herbs and spices is applied over the entire abdomen to wear a bengkung (Sator et al., 2022). A long, corset-like piece of fabric is used to tightly wrap or bind the abdomen, starting just below the breast and going all the way down to the thighs (Norbaiah Mat Yaacob, 2022).

In addition, using the body wrap is highly recommended to restore the slimness of the body as it was before pregnancy and childbirth. Berbengkung, or body wrapping, is a common ritual among mothers of Malay descent. Using lengthy strips of cloth, frequently smeared with herbal pastes like tapel, the abdomen is securely bound. Bengkung Jawa and Bengkung Panjang are two examples. This technique is thought to help with bloating, uterine contraction, and body form restoration (Mohd Yusoff et al., 2018; Sator et al., 2022).

2.1.4. Vaginal steam bath (bertangas)

Tangas or bertangas means to warm the body, bathe, or smoke with steam until sweating. The steam or smoke used in these kinds of vaginal steaming or smoking comes from the heated herbal composition (Hashim, 2022). Bertangas is one of the postpartum care that aims to heal wounds, shrink the female private parts (vagina), and uterus, and refresh the body (Azmi et al., 2019). In addition, defecating can also remove excess blood after childbirth. Abstinence usually starts on the third day of abstinence until the end of the abstinence period, which is once a day in the morning (Hashim, 2022).

The Malay society frequently uses two different types of tangas: dry tangas (tangas kering) and wet tangas (tangas basah). It just depends on the comfort level of the individual concerned. Both have the same advantages. The tangas chair, also known as the kerusi tangas, and the bekas tangas are the primary bertangas tools (Azmi et al., 2019; Mohd Yusoff et al., 2018).

A variety of selected herbal ingredients can be used for defecation. For dry tangas, among the ingredients used are fenugreek (Trigonella foenum-graecum), majakani (Quercus infectoria), black cumin (Nigella sativa), henna (Lawsonia inermis), and turmeric (Curcuma longa). For wet tangas, the commonly used ingredients are fenugreek, betel leaves (Piper betle), galangal (Alpinia galangal), pandan leaves (Pandanus amaryllifolius), lemongrass (Cymbopogon nardus), lime (Citrus aurantifolia), tamarind (Garcinia atroviridis), and henna leaves. (Hashim, 2022).

2.1.5. Pilis

Pilis is a preparation that is applied to the forehead (Jamal et al., 2011). The use of pilis aims to prevent or treat dizziness, blurred vision, discomfort in the eyes, and fainting in women after childbirth (Diah, 2023). In addition, there are also Malay medical manuscripts that record that pilis are used to treat windy diseases (meroyan angin). The use of pilis is practiced two to three times a day throughout the abstinence period, which is for 40 to 44 days (Norbaiah Mat Yaacob, 2022).
Most pilis ingredients contain a mixture of 9 species of plants and spices in a certain measure. Examples of plants that are often used are Ginger (Alpinia galanga), Cekur (Kaempferia galanga), Mother of Turmeric (Curcuma longa), Bonglai (Zingiber cassumunar), White Cumin (Cuminum cyminum), Cloves (Syzygium aromaticum), Flower of Lawang (Illicium verum), Cinnamon (Cinnamomum verum), Tail Pepper (Piper cubeba), and Twisted Chili (Helicteres isora) (Norbaiah Mat Yaacob, 2022).

2.1.6. Tapel

Tapel is a traditional remedy applied directly to the stomach's surface. For a mother giving birth naturally, tapel can be used whenever she feels ready. However, if the mother is giving birth surgically, tapel should wait to be used until the doctor declares the surgical wound healed, which is usually two weeks following delivery (Laili, 2019). Also, the use of tapel aims to deflate the stomach, tighten the skin of the stomach, accelerate the contraction of the uterus/birth, and improve blood circulation (Mustapha, 2022).
There are various tapel ingredients used by practitioners, and the most basic ingredient is a mixture of lime juice (Citrus aurantiifolia) and lime. Some mothers, after giving birth, have side effects because of using ingredients such as lemon juice mixed with lime, among which the abdominal skin becomes dry, blistered, or chafed, and can cause scars. So, other ingredients that are used to balance the side effects and increase the effectiveness include tamarind (Tamarindus indica), ginger (Zingiber officinale), turmeric (Curcuma longa), jaggery (Acorus calamus), bonglai (Zingiber montanum), and garlic (Allium sativum) (Mustapha, 2022).

2.1.7. Param

The aim of applying a param is to keep the body warm, enhance blood flow to reduce breast and body swelling, and help to smooth the skin. Usually, the param is used for 40 days following childbirth (Yuniantini & Nurvembrianti, 2022). Param ingredients consist of 5-9 ingredients, including spices and herbs. Among the spices used are white cumin (Cuminum cyminum), sweet cumin (Pimpinella anisum), and black pepper (Piper nigrum), while herbs such as ginger (Zingiber officinale), turmeric (Curcuma longa), jarangau (Acorus calamus), cekur (Kaempferia) galangal, and rice. The rice used is rice that has been soaked first until it crumbles or finely ground rice. Rice plays a role in beautifying the skin. The rice mixture also allows the protein to form into lumps (Mustapha, 2022).

2.1.8. Herbal bath

According to Traditional Complementary and Medicine, Kelantan called herbal baths a “Mandi Teresak” (MOH, 2017). Women after childbirth who take herbal baths can enhance their physical and mental wellness (Jahiman et al., 2021). According to certain Malay customs, mothers are not allowed to take a bath for three days following childbirth. Nevertheless, to improve blood flow, the mother's body would be cleaned with warm water after giving birth. Some people, on the other hand, do not follow this rule, allowing them to take a bath the day following delivery. To prevent the "wind" from entering the body and producing aches and pains, it is also advised that postpartum mothers avoid taking a bath in the early morning (Hla Myint et al., 2019; Mohd Yusoff et al., 2018; Sator et al., 2022).
The water for the herbal bath should be warm to hot, preferably heated, and a variety of herbs, including Desmodium gangeticum (daun Meringan), must be included (Mohd Yusoff et al., 2018). Not only that, a variety of spices and selected herbal leaves that are easily available such as galangal leaves, noni leaves, pandan leaves, betel leaves, ginger leaves, henna leaves, turmeric leaves, kaffir lime leaves, lemongrass, kaffir lime and also a little mixture of fenugreek and cinnamon bark are used for herbal bath (MOH, 2017). Furthermore, the woman receives a basic body massage while soaking in water at the same time. The purpose of this massage is to release the woman's painful muscles and eliminate the stress that during the delivery process had built up in her body (Jahiman et al., 2021; Mohd Yusoff et al., 2018).

2.1.9. Heat treatment (berdiang/bersalai)

Heat treatment (berdiang/ bersalai) or old people called Adat Rombak Dapur is a practice of women giving birth for generations to take care of their health and release taboo bonds during the period of abstinence, which is 40 days or 44 days. The community calls it a period of abstinence or bereavement, which means a period of rest from doing daily chores that are harmful to the mother's health. This period can also discipline the confined mother by eating good food and taking care of herself to continue to stay healthy (Norbaiah Mat Yaacob, 2022).
Berdiang or Menyalai for Terengganu people is the process of warming up the body, cleaning dirty blood, promoting blood circulation, and shrinking birthmarks. The mother who has just given birth is lying on a bed under which is placed a hearth stove whose fire is made of wood and charcoal. The heat of this fire is very necessary to warm the body and aims to shrink veins and veins and remove dirty blood (Norbaiah Mat Yaacob, 2022).

2.2. Dietary intake during postpartum practices

2.2.1. Traditional beliefs

After giving birth, abstinence is a practice often performed by women in Malaysia, whether they are Malay, Chinese, or Indian. Chinese and Indian women abstain for thirty (30) days, while Malay women abstain for forty (40) to forty-four (44) days (Fadzil et al., 2016). Adherence to the nutritional diet during the confinement period is important to ensure the recovery process goes smoothly. The concept behind traditional dietary practices is that local foods are categorized into 'hot' and 'cold', regardless of the actual temperature of the food (Dennis et al., 2007a).
In traditional Malay medical practice, mothers should always be in a 'hot' state, eating foods with hot elements such as ginger and black pepper, and avoiding foods with cold elements like long beans, cucumbers, bamboo shoots, pineapples, crabs, watermelons, and certain

types of fish. They are encouraged to practice tonic drinks (jamu) or herbal paste (maajun) made from herbs considered hot (Fok et al., 2016; Mohd Yusoff et al., 2018).
In Chinese society, mothers after giving birth are advised to drink more water boiled with dried longan and red dates than plain water. They are also encouraged to consume herbs such as ginseng soup, red dates, and "lihing," which is a liquor made from fermented rice boiled with ginger and chicken. Some fish, such as pomfret, red fish, and white fish, cooked with sesame oil and ginger, are considered safe and non-itchy for women after childbirth (Hishamshah et al., 2012; Mohd Yusoff et al., 2018; Naser et al., 2012).
Indians follow several nutritional diets during confinement periods, avoiding foods considered "cold" or "windy." Fruits such as grapes, eggplant, jackfruit, moringa oleifera, fenugreek seeds, shark meat, cardamom, ginger, turmeric, anise, and black pepper can cause a postpartum mother to become "cold." The addition of spices in cooking is also advised. After giving birth, the mother is given a mixed herbal drink called makjun and is not allowed to take ice-cold water, but can occasionally drink warm water (Hishamshah et al., 2012; Mohd Yusoff et al., 2018; Naser et al., 2012).

2.2.2. Modern beliefs

Modern dietary practices advocate balanced nutrition with protein, fiber, and hydration to assist healing and lactation, while traditional dietary advice emphasizes "hot" foods like ginger and pepper to promote warmth and recovery (Ball, de Jersey, et al., 2022; Malhotra et al., 2022). Postpartum mothers need an additional 330 to 400 calories per day to maintain milk production (USDA, 2020). This includes a variety of fruits, vegetables, whole grains, legumes, lean protein, and healthy fats (Ball, De Jersey, et al., 2022). If necessary, multivitamins or supplements may be considered.
Hydration is essential for milk production, tissue repair, and body function. Drinking water every time after breastfeeding and consuming hydrating foods like watermelon, cucumber, celery, oranges, and strawberries contributes to overall fluid intake and provides additional nutrients (Zhou et al., 2019).
Protein is essential for tissue repair, recovery, and overall health. Foods rich in protein include lean meat, chicken, fish, eggs, dairy products, legumes, and plant-based protein sources (de Castro et al., 2019). While iron-rich foods, such as lean meats, poultry, fish, beans, lentils, fortified cereals, and dark leafy greens, can help prevent and treat postpartum anaemia (Hu et al., 2019). Postpartum mothers should adopt a diet rich in fibre to promote digestive health and prevent constipation (Turawa et al., 2020).
Education and information among practitioners

2.2.3. Practitioners' knowledge

Practitioner knowledge refers to the specific knowledge, abilities, and perspectives acquired through professional practice and real-world experience in a particular field or study (Papantos, 2023). Both mothers and practitioners must provide postnatal-related treatments (Wang & Yates, 2006). Healthcare workers may lack the necessary knowledge and abilities, making it difficult for them to provide mothers with the necessary information about therapies. Practitioners must learn about therapies and apply best practices to build the talent to treat from the viewpoints of mothers (Therapies, 2015).
A certificate of massage is essential for practitioners to demonstrate their proficiency in massage therapy (Melayu, 2021). In Malaysia, the Skills Development Department has prepared a recognized skills program to help the community find job opportunities and produce trained workers. To become a postnatal care practitioner, individuals need a Malaysian Certificate of Skills Level 3 (SKM 3) in massage therapy. Mamacare offers training and programs for practitioners, requiring a Malaysian Skills Diploma 4 (DKM 4). Candidates must pass Level 4 and meet certain conditions to practice MamaCare post-natal care services using the MamaCare brand (Mamacare, 2017).

2.2.4. Practitioners' certificate

The Capacity Training Program under MamaCare aims to empower women's economies by providing maternal care services through traditional Malay medical practices after childbirth. Implemented since 2012 under the National Blue Ocean Strategy, the program aims to improve the well-being of women, families, and communities (LPPKN, 2018). A standard, comprehensive, and recognized training program was established through the National Occupational Skills Standard (NOSS), which focuses on Traditional Postpartum Mother Care to strengthen this initiative. This NOSS aims to produce skilled practitioners with skills in maternal massage, exercise, healthy eating, breastfeeding, baby care, herbal preparation, family counseling services, parenting of young children, guidance and assistance, and domestic management (LPPKN, 2018).
To obtain the Level 4 Malaysian Skills Diploma Certificate, candidates must be competent in performing complex technical work activities, be responsible for their work, and be responsible for resource allocation. To practice maternal care services using the MamaCare brand, candidates must comply with LPPKN conditions and take the General Works Management elective competency unit in DKM 4. Candidates who pass Level 5 must master basic principles and more complex techniques, prioritize work, handle resource allocation, and be responsible for analysis, planning, implementation, and evaluation (Mamacare, 2017). Nevertheless, no research has yet examined the current implementation of these techniques by qualified practitioners in Malaysia.

3. Research methodology

3.1. Research design

This study adopted a qualitative multiple case study design to explore the postpartum care practices among practitioners in Malaysia. Data is collected through interviews with 12 practitioners from different confinement centres. This research has used multiple case studies with holistic (type 3) as stated in Figure 1.1 to focus on traditional postpartum care practices. Multiple case studies have been used for this research because it has six (6) confinement centres, and the respondents are practitioners in the confinement centres. This confinement centre is in the Klang Valley. Single embedded has been used to determine traditional postpartum care practices among practitioners. The respondents are practitioners from these centres, selected by top management and practitioners' confinement centres.

Types	Single Case Designs	Multiple Case Designs
Holistic (single unit of analysis)	Type 1	Type 3
Embedded (multiple units of analysis)	Type 2	Type 4

Fig. 1.1: Types of Case Study Design.

3.2. Research instrument

This study used a questionnaire to gather information from practitioners in registered confinement centres in Malaysia. The questionnaire contained two parts: demographic background and traditional postpartum care practices. A semi-structured interview was chosen to gather data, which was followed by observation and informal and unstructured interviewing. The language used was chosen based on the respondents' understanding level, and the original questionnaire was written in English and Malay. The results were recorded using a smartphone, and the results were transcribed verbatim.

3.3. Sampling design

This study chooses purposive sampling, also known as judgment sampling, which is a type of non-probability sampling technique. A purposive sampling sample was used for six (6) confinement centre that were selected and willing to participate in this research. The researcher will choose respondents from the listed practitioners registered in the National Population and Family Development Board (LPPKN). The sample of this research will be determined using the sample size by Cresswell (2016). According to Cresswell (2016), a sample of 5 – 25 respondents is sufficient in qualitative research. However, Morse (1994) recommends at least six (6) respondents in qualitative research. There are six (6) postnatal care centre selected in this study. The target population was certified traditional postpartum care practitioners in Malaysia. Participants were selected based on their inclusion criteria, such as: must be actively practicing traditional postpartum care, hold a recognized SKM and DKM related to postnatal care, and have at least 3 years of practical experience.

3.4. Data collection

Data will be collected through semi-structured interviews conducted at participants' workplaces. The interviews will be recorded on a smartphone and transcribed verbatim. Participants will be contacted via email and telephone, allowing for open and in-depth discussions about their work experiences and research topics. The interview schedule is based on Table 1.1. The interviews will be conducted in English and Malay, fostering a respectful and compassionate relationship between the researcher and participants.

Table 1.1: Interview Schedule

Objective 1: Traditional Postpartum Care Practices	-	Hot stone compression
	-	Postpartum massage
	-	Body wrapping
	-	Vaginal steam bath
	-	Pilis
	-	Param
	-	Tapel
	-	Herbal bath
	-	Berdiang/ bersalai
Objective 2: Dietary intake during the postpartum period	-	Food intake in traditional beliefs
	-	Food intake in modern beliefs
Objective 3: Education and information	-	Qualifications and experience to become a therapist
	-	Certificate in postnatal care

3.5. Data analysis

The data gathered from the interview are analysed using Thematic Analysis (TA) following Braun and Clarke's (2006) theory. Six (6) steps were taken for this study to meet the standards for having a good theme analysis process:

Table 1.2: Phases of Thematic Analysis

Phase	Description of the process
1. Familiarizing yourself with your data	Transcribing data (if necessary), reading and re-reading the data, and noting down initial ideas.
2. Generating initial codes	Coding interesting features of the data systematically across the entire data set, collating data relevant to each code.
3. Searching for themes	Collating codes into potential themes, gathering all data relevant to each potential theme.
4. Reviewing themes	Checking if the themes work to the coded extracts (Level 1) and the entire data set (Level 2), generating a thematic 'map' of the analysis
5. Defining and naming themes	Ongoing analysis to refine the specifics of each theme, and the overall story the analysis tells, generating clear definitions and names for each theme.
6. Producing the report	The final opportunity for analysis. Selection of vivid, compelling extract examples, the final analysis of selected extracts, relating of the analysis to the research question and literature, and producing a scholarly report of the analysis.

Sources: Adopted by Braun and Clarke (2006).

4. Findings

4.1. Traditional postpartum care practices

4.1.1. Hot stone compression

The study reveals that practitioners often use 'bertuam' before starting hot stone compression during confinement. Bertuam softens the body and improves blood circulation, while hot stone compression focuses on the stomach to remove the blood and swelling. The practitioner uses a hot cloth moistened with herbal decoction to soften the muscles and improve blood circulation.

Before we start hot stone compression, I will do bertuam first. This is important to warm up the muscles and improve blood circulation to make the hot stone compression process more effective. Soak using the hot cloth moistened with herbal decoction. It aims to soften the muscle tissue, open the pores, and help the absorption of the herbs we use. This process also makes the body more relaxed before we start the hot stone compression process, which focuses more on breaking blood clots and wind in the body.

(Participant 5)

Hot stone compression uses river stones, which have good minerals, and is done twice a day for a week or more. The practitioner uses various techniques, such as rolling, up-and-down motions, and repeating motions to ensure the entire abdominal area receives the full benefit. The practitioner also emphasizes the importance of Bertuam in the hot stone compression process, as it helps reduce pain and swelling, improve blood circulation, and speed up the recovery process.

Most participants understand the importance of using the right techniques for postpartum care, and the practitioner's understanding of the benefits of these practices is crucial for effective postpartum care.

4.1.2. Postpartum massage

Postpartum massage is a traditional practice that involves massaging the abdomen, waist, back, legs, and hands to improve blood circulation and reduce swelling. Practitioners focus on various points, such as the face, breasts, and back, to relieve stress and stimulate blood flow. The massage process takes about 2 hours and can be done on both normal and cesarean mothers.

In this massage technique, we will massage the mother's whole body. Starting from the tip of the toe to the tip of the head, then the front and back. So, in the massage, we do have to touch the whole body, head, and breasts.

(Participant 7)

Postpartum massage can provide numerous benefits, such as firm, solid muscles, improved blood circulation, and a fresher appearance. Some practitioners apply herbal oil to the back for more effective results. Massage is also essential during the abstinence process, as it helps restore balance and improve blood circulation.

First, I will apply herbal oil on the back of the body so that this massage will be more effective. This oil also helps to warm the body and relax the muscles. This massage also helps remove wind from the body and improve the internal system. This massage will also help with uterine contractions and speed up the recovery process. After that will do a massage on the abdomen to help the contraction process.

(Participant 5)

Postpartum massage is done daily for the first two weeks after delivery, promoting blood circulation, reducing swelling, and helping shrink the uterus. Practitioners may also check the breast area and massage if necessary.

The results showed that most participants understood the correct techniques and concepts of traditional postpartum care, with most reporting that they understood how to perform postpartum massage for mothers with normal deliveries or cesarean sections.

4.1.3. Body wrapping

The study highlights the importance of using body wraps during confinement periods to restore a mother's body shape, similar to pre-pregnancy. There are various types of body wraps, including the traditional "bengkung lilit" and modern "modern bengkung". The traditional bengkung is made of thick cloth and wrapped around the stomach and waist, providing support for the stomach and back. The modern bengkung is more practical and offers good support, but may not be as strong as the traditional wrap. The softer "bengkung barut" is suitable for mothers who prefer a not-too-tight wrap.

The process of applying a body wrap involves several steps, including lying down or standing upright, wrapping the curved fabric from the lower abdomen, and adjusting the straps according to comfort. Bengkung aids in the recovery process after childbirth by deflating the stomach, compressing the abdomen, and reducing wind. It also supports the back and spine, reducing fatigue and back pain experienced by mothers.

There are several types of body wraps to choose from. The first is the "bengkung lilit traditional.". Bengkung is long, usually made of rather thick cloth, and wrapped several times around the stomach to the waist. It's great for supporting the whole stomach and back, but it needs help to put it on because the wrapping process is a bit complicated. The second type is the "modern bengkung", which is easier to wear. Usually, it is the adhesive type, with velcro or zip, and is more practical for mothers who want to wear it themselves. It also provides good support, just maybe not as strong as the "traditional wrap.". There is also "bengkung barut", which is softer and is usually used for mothers who prefer bengkung with a not-too-tight wrap. Barut is suitable for mothers who have had a cesarean section because it is gentler on the wound.

(Participant 1)

The study found that twelve participants have a deep understanding of the benefits of wearing body wraps during confinement and know the most suitable ones for postpartum mothers with normal births and cesarean sections.

4.1.4. Vaginal steam bath

The study suggests that practitioners do not emphasize the use of vaginal steam baths during early childbirth due to several factors. The body is still in a critical healing phase, especially in the perineum and reproductive organs, and hot steam from tangas can cause irritation or delay healing.

After giving birth, the mother's body is still in the process of recovery. In the initial period of birth, especially in the first to the second week, the mother's body has just gone through a heavy process, whether it is a normal delivery or surgery. At the beginning of birth, the

uterus and reproductive organs are undergoing healing, especially in the perineal area or the suture site, if any. The use of tangas involving hot steam can apply additional pressure and may cause irritation or interfere with the wound-healing process.
(Participant 2)
There are two types of vaginal steam baths: dry-vaginal steam baths (tangas kering) and wet-vaginal steam baths (tangas basah). Wet tangas use water vapor from boiling herbal ingredients, while dry tangas use heat from hot coals or stones. Both types have their benefits, such as improving blood circulation, speeding up wound healing, removing wind and toxins, supporting hormonal balance, increasing energy and stamina, reducing stress and anxiety, and providing a calming effect.
Tangas are of two types, namely wet tangas and dry tangas. Both types have their way of implementation and benefits. Wet towels using water vapor. Herbal materials such as leaves, wood roots, and spices are boiled in boiling water, and the steam is used for therapy. This steam helps open pores, improve blood circulation, and speed up healing. Dry tangas do not use water. It uses heat from hot coals or stones, where dried herbs are burned. This heat is believed to help expel wind from the body, dry the parturition, and strengthen the uterine muscles.
(Participant 1)
However, three participants of twelve participants were not recommended to do a vaginal steam bath during early childbirth, despite their deep understanding of traditional postpartum care practices.

4.1.5. Pilis

The study highlights the importance of pilis in traditional postpartum care, particularly among the Malay community. Pilis is a traditional herbal ingredient used to reduce headaches and refresh the body, especially during the abstinence period. It helps to reduce dizziness and wind, which can cause discomfort during the process.
After giving birth, our bodies are very tired, right? The head always feels heavy. But when you put the pilis on the forehead, you will feel relieved. It's cold on the forehead. Dizziness is also reduced. Pilis is indeed a traditional practice, but the herbs in the pilis have benefits. In addition to avoiding dizziness, he also helps remove wind from the body. After giving birth, there is a lot of wind in the body due to hormonal changes. After putting on the pills, the body feels fresher, and the head feels lighter. In this abstinence, we have to take care of many things. Using Pilates is one way to make sure our body recovers quickly.
(Participant 2)
The main ingredients in pilis are turmeric, ginger, lemongrass, and lime, which have cooling and soothing properties. The herbs in pilis help to cool the scalp, stimulate blood circulation, and relieve tension in the head. The frequency of pilis application depends on the mother's comfort, and the frequency depends on her condition. Pilis are usually applied once a day for 7 to 10 days after delivery, with some mothers continuing abstinence until the end. The duration of pilis application depends on the mother's comfort and the frequency of abstinence.
Pilis is an herbal paste that is applied to the mother’s forehead. It is used to reduce headaches and dizziness and give the mother freshness. The main ingredients in pilis are usually turmeric, pandan leaves, and some other herbs. Pilis helps calm the mind and reduce stress after childbirth.
(Participant 10)
The study found that twelve participants deeply understood the use of pilis during the confinement period, emphasizing the benefits of traditional postpartum care practices.

4.1.6. Param

Param is a traditional Malay treatment for mothers who have just given birth, playing a crucial role in postpartum care. It is a herbal concoction applied to the mother's body, particularly on the abdomen, waist, and legs, to warm the body, improve blood circulation, and reduce pain or fatigue.
I see many positive changes in the mothers I treat. Param helps the body regain energy and accelerates the muscle recovery process, especially in the abdomen and waist. Often, mothers feel their bodies are lighter and their stomachs are tidier after using the potty. Usually, after the param is applied, the mother will feel warmth in the applied part. This is very good for preventing wind from entering the body. In addition, after a few days of use, many mothers report that they feel more comfortable, less tired, and their digestion is better because Param helps remove wind from the body.
(Participant 7)
The main ingredients used in param are ginger, fresh turmeric, fragrant lemongrass leaves, and betel nut. These ingredients help the mother recover, regain energy, and overcome discomfort. The main ingredients include ginger for its heating properties, live turmeric for its anti-inflammatory properties, fragrant lemongrass leaves for its refreshing and calming effect, and betel nut for its skin-tightening properties. Following taboos and avoiding cold or windy foods can also help the mother's recovery.
Some taboos need to be followed. Among them, mothers should avoid eating cold or windy foods that can delay recovery. In addition, the mother should not be too exposed to the cold wind, especially after applying paraffin, because the body needs to stay warm to get the best effect.
(Participant 5)
Eight participants out of twelve understand the use of a param during confinement, with the majority recognizing its importance in traditional postpartum care practices.

4.1.7. Tapel

Tapel is a traditional Malay treatment used during the postpartum period to help restore the mother's body. It is an herbal concoction applied to the stomach, aiming to shrink the uterus, remove wind, and make the stomach feel neater.
Tapel is important to help the recovery process of the body after childbirth. It is applied to the abdomen to shrink the uterus and deflate the abdomen. In addition, it can help expel wind from the body.
(Participant 6)
The main benefits of tapel include reducing swelling, improving blood circulation, and restoring energy. The main ingredients used in this treatment are turmeric, ginger, black pepper, and lime. Other ingredients include noni leaves, turmeric, ginger, and coconut oil. The tapel also contains cinnamon, lemongrass, and pandan leaves.

This tapel is made from some herbal ingredients which are very good for recovery. The main ingredients in this tapel include cinnamon, lemongrass, and pandan leaves. Cinnamon works to warm the body and improve blood circulation. This is important after giving birth to keep the blood in the body running well and help expel wind. Lemongrass also has a warming function; it helps remove wind and refresh the body after childbirth.
(Participant 9)
Most participants in the study understand the importance of tapel during the confinement period. Overall, the tapel is a valuable postpartum care practice.

4.1.9. Herbal bath

The study reveals that herbal bathing is a traditional practice used to restore the mother's body after childbirth. It involves using herbal mixtures with healing and calming properties, such as betel leaves, ginger, fragrant lemongrass, turmeric leaves, and kaffir lime. These herbs have antiseptic properties, reduce inflammation, and improve blood circulation. The scent of lemongrass and kaffir lime can also calm the mind.
This herbal bath is great for helping restore energy, eliminate wind, and relax tense muscles after childbirth. It also speeds up the internal recovery process and has a calming effect. We use a mixture of traditional herbs such as betel leaves, ginger, fragrant lemongrass, turmeric leaves, and kaffir lime. Each herb has its properties. For example, betel leaves help cleanse the body of toxins, gingerly remove wind, and fragrant lemongrass provides a soothing aroma.
(Participant 2)
The participants explained the duration and techniques of taking herbal baths, which are done daily for the first week or two after giving birth. The technique involves boiling the herbs, allowing the water to cool, and taking a bath. The participants also mentioned the importance of this traditional postpartum care practice.
This herbal bath is very beneficial, especially for expectant mothers. The herbal bath technique is quite simple, but there are important steps to follow. The first step is to prepare the herbs. We usually use betel leaves, ginger, fragrant lemongrass, turmeric leaves, and kaffir lime. These herbs are boiled in water for about 15-20 minutes. After that, let the boiled water cool a little until it becomes warm. The second step is to take a bath with the boiled water. If you use a bucket, pour herbal water slowly from head to toe. You need to make sure that every part of your body is exposed to the herbal water, especially the stomach and back, which may still be sore from giving birth.
(Participant 10)
The results show that all participants in the study have a deep understanding of taking herbal baths during the confinement period.

4.1.10. Heat treatment (berdiang/bersalai)

The study revealed that traditional postpartum care practices like berdiang, which involve heating the body with fire or coal, are no longer accepted due to safety concerns. Participants reported that saunas offer better temperature control and a cleaner environment, while berdiang uses coals. Saunas use electronically controlled heat, while fireplaces require careful monitoring.
Berdiang or bersalai is a traditional practice that uses coals to warm the body after giving birth. It is indeed effective in restoring the body, but there are some limitations in terms of safety and temperature control. Saunas have several advantages. First, the temperature in the sauna can be controlled more accurately and safely. This means you don't have to worry about the overheating that can happen with embers. Second, saunas also provide a cleaner and more controlled environment.
(Participant 1)
Saunas and berdiang are both meant to warm up the body and help with the postpartum recovery process. The difference is that the sauna uses electronically controlled heat, while the fireplace uses coals that require more careful monitoring.
(Participant 12)
Out of twelve participants, two noted that berdiang is no longer used today. Most participants advised caution when using this practice and ensuring safety. If discomfort occurs, the session should be stopped immediately. The study highlights the importance of understanding traditional postpartum care practices from practitioners' perspectives. The findings suggest that saunas offer a safer and more controlled environment for postpartum recovery.

4.2. Dietary intake during postpartum practices

4.2.1. Traditional beliefs

The study reveals that traditional beliefs in Malay culture and some Asian cultures heavily influence dietary intake during postpartum care practices. These beliefs focus on maintaining body balance through the consumption of hot, herbs, and herbs to speed up recovery and restore energy. Postpartum mothers are advised to avoid certain foods, such as cucumbers, watermelons, and raw foods, as they can cause bloating and disrupt the mother's body's balance.
The mother’s diet after giving birth cannot make the blood more active. For example, people say that eating a lot of vegetables can make her bleed a lot. But the mother’s condition after giving birth cannot be fed from that kind of source. For example, like a lamb, you can’t eat it. You must eat a suitable diet to be stable regarding hormones. The mother's diet after giving birth must be taken care of to prevent wind from entering the body, so that there are no complications. For example, some mothers cannot eat spinach. Spinach has a property that can freeze blood. So, when the blood becomes coagulated, eating “cold” food can cause chills and fever. Cabbage also has the same properties as spinach.
(Participant 6)
The Ministry of Health advises against eating haruan fish, eel, and sea urchin, as they can cause adhesions in the stomach and bleeding during cesarean births. Chinese and Indians also have their prohibitions, with Chinese people using ginger in cooking and drinks, and only drinking alcohol for abstinence. They usually eat proteins like chicken, fish, and meat, and herbal soups.
Among the fish that are not recommended to eat during abstinence are haruan fish, eel, sea urchin, and so on. Worried that when the mother gives birth to the next pregnancy, she will have to have a cesarean, and there will be a strong adhesion in the uterus. Then there will be bleeding. So, the doctors do not suggest eating those fish.
(Participant 8)

Indians emphasize the use of spices and herbs in their diet to help mothers recover after childbirth. One main dish is fish or chicken curry cooked with ginger, turmeric, and black pepper, which helps reduce inflammation and improve blood flow. Drinks include water cooked with spices, turmeric water, ginger water, or herbal tea, and milk mixed with turmeric.
For Indians, they emphasize the use of spices and herbs in their diet to help mothers recover after childbirth. One of the main dishes is fish or chicken curry cooked with lots of ginger, turmeric, and black pepper. Ginger and turmeric are very important because they help reduce inflammation and improve blood flow. As for drinks, they usually drink water cooked with spices such as turmeric water, ginger water, or herbal tea. In addition, milk mixed with turmeric is also very popular because it is believed to speed up recovery.
(Participant 10)
The study found that nine out of twelve participants have a deep understanding of dietary intake during postpartum care practices. Traditional beliefs about postpartum diet focus on keeping the body in balance through the consumption of hot, herbs, and herbs to speed up recovery and restore energy. Abstinence from cold foods, seafood, and windy foods is important in this belief.

4.2.2. Modern beliefs

The study reveals that modern beliefs emphasize balanced and science-based nutrition during postpartum to ensure the mother gets enough nutrients for the recovery process, breastfeeding, and overall well-being. Traditional postpartum nutrition involves foods rich in nutrients, easily digested, and have warming properties to balance the mother's body. Drinks like ginger decoction, honey, and hot milk help warm the body and increase energy. Adequate water intake is crucial for breastfeeding mothers, as it helps improve digestion, remove toxins, and ensure adequate milk production.
Proper nutrition after delivery is very important to help the mother's recovery, provide energy, and ensure adequate milk production for the baby. Traditionally, postpartum nutrition involves foods that are rich in nutrients, easily digested, and have warming properties to balance the mother's body. Chicken or fish soup cooked with herbs such as ginger, turmeric, and black pepper helps warm the body and improve blood circulation. Drinks such as ginger decoction, honey, and hot milk help warm the body and increase energy. Adequate water intake is very important to ensure good hydration, especially for breastfeeding mothers. Water helps improve digestion, remove toxins from the body, and ensure adequate milk production. Mothers are advised to drink at least 8 glasses of water a day, or more if they are breastfeeding.
(Participant 5)
We, as CL, must give balanced food. A balanced diet should be sufficient in terms of protein and fiber, and drink enough water. Only then does the mother have the energy to breastfeed. As a CL, I want to give a balanced diet to the mother. However, some mothers forbid the client to eat vegetables. The purpose is to eat vegetables to make them fiber, so the client can easily defecate and not be constipated. There is also a ban on not eating vegetables, but you can eat "ulam". Ulam pegaga, Ulam Raja. So, we as CL sometimes must accept the opinion of this client's mother.
(Participant 12)
Nutritious nutrition is essential for mothers fter giving birth, as it can help breast milk more than for the recovery process of her body. Modern ways of eating focus on food nutrition, including vegetables, fruits, and plain water. Contextual food should be colorful and colorful to attract the mother's appetite, and the diet should be stale quickly to defecate and contain nutrients that boost breast milk.
Today's confinement side dishes are very different from the past. If only the dishes were gloomy before. But now it's colorful. We will serve fruit to give vitamins to the mother, and vegetables so that it is easy for the mother to defecate. Water is not forbidden like before. So, mom will have a greater appetite to eat. When you have an appetite, the mother will have the energy to breastfeed the child and will feel healthier.
(Participant 2)
Professionals also emphasize the importance of a suitable diet for hormone stability and focusing on brain function, such as DHA-rich foods like goat's milk. Cooking abstinent dishes is easy and does not torture the mother, and some types of fish and chicken can be eaten during confinement. However, sea bream, mackerel, and salmon should not be eaten during confinement due to ancient beliefs.
The study found that eight participants have a deep understanding of postpartum diet intake in terms of modern beliefs, promoting science-based balanced nutrition, and ensuring adequate hydration.

4.3. Education and information among practitioners

4.3.1. Practitioners' certificates

The study reveals that formal qualifications such as the Malaysian Skills Certificate (SKM) and the Malaysian Skills Diploma (DKM) significantly contribute to the professionalism and quality of postnatal care services. Practitioners with SKM in traditional techniques, such as postpartum massage and the use of herbs, are better equipped to provide these services. Practitioners under LPPKN are trained to check mothers' blood pressure, but not all CLs do so.
Practitioners under LPPKN are indeed trained to check mothers' blood pressure. So near there, you can see whether this practitioner is professional or not. But not all CLs do that. It's just that LPPKN trained us to do that.
(Participant 4)
The certificate level for practitioners varies, with LPPKN offering an SKM 3 certificate for beginners, followed by a DKM certificate, and a VTO certificate for further education. Some practitioners have experience in postpartum care for over 10 years, further strengthening their career through classes to obtain a certificate.
Practitioners who join under LPPKN will receive an SKM 3 certificate for starters. After joining several courses and classes, they will get a DKM certificate. And if practitioners want to add more knowledge and want to go further to become teachers, they can continue to get a VTO certificate.
(Participant 1)
Some participants have inherited their grandparents' heritage, having over 23 years of experience in the field. They joined LPPKN in 2012 to increase knowledge and have a DKM certificate in therapeutics and maternal care after childbirth. They have also attended courses and seminars related to postpartum maternal care and are involved in training programs recognized by professional bodies.
I have been involved in traditional postpartum care for over 10 years. I started as an assistant to my mother, a traditional midwife, and from there, I learned various techniques and practices of postpartum care that were passed down through the generations. In addition to the practical experience I inherited from my mother, I have attended several courses and seminars related to postpartum maternal care

held by the Malaysian Ministry of Health and several higher education institutions. I have a Malaysian Skills Certificate (SKM) in Traditional Health Care and a Certificate in Traditional Midwifery. I am also involved in several training programs recognized by professional bodies in this field.
(Participant 6)
In general, ten participants have experience of more than 10 years in postpartum care, with the majority having a certificate in SKM 3 massage therapy. This study highlights the importance of formal qualifications in ensuring the quality and professionalism of postnatal care services.

4.3.2. Practitioners' knowledge

The study reveals that traditional postpartum care practitioners possess in-depth knowledge of practices that help mothers recover after childbirth, a result of generations of experience, formal training, and cultural and religious appreciation. Practitioners, known as "confinement ladies," must understand the meaning of postpartum care before starting services and become good practitioners. Postnatal care typically involves physical treatment, nutrition, and specific techniques such as massage, bending, herbal baths, and appropriate nutritional practices.
We as therapists who care for mothers in labor, are called "confinement ladies", therapists, or practitioners. So, we need a special course to care for mothers in labor. CL needs to know what maternity care is. How to take care of a mother in abstinence? What treatment should be done first? How to bathe a baby? How to handle a baby with jaundice?
(Participant 4)
Traditional knowledge is usually passed down through direct learning from mothers or grandmothers to their children. However, formal courses like the Malaysian Skills Certificate (SKM) and the Malaysian Skills Diploma (DKM) in postnatal care help ensure systematically and safely carrying out this practice.
Some participants have over 23 years of experience in postnatal care due to their grandparents' heritage, while others have been involved in traditional postpartum care for over 10 years. They have also worked as a nurse in the O&G department but decided to serve in the mother and child services.
I used to work as a nurse in the O&G department. But I stopped being a nurse long ago because I was too tired. But I still want to serve in the mother and child services. So, I decided to do this postnatal service. So, I started as a CL in 2016.
(Participant 8)
For those with deep knowledge of traditional postpartum care practices, they can combine traditional techniques with professional standards. The courses emphasize safety, proper massage technique, and understanding of the anatomy and physiology of the body, enhancing the quality of service offered.
In general, nine participants have deep knowledge of traditional postpartum care practices, with most participants gaining knowledge from their experiences from generation to generation and previous careers.

5. Discussion

5.1. Traditional postpartum care practices

5.1.1. Hot stone compression

The study found that traditional postpartum care in the Malay community uses hot stone compression, which has several benefits. Practitioners suggest that hot stone compression can speed up recovery and reduce milk swelling in nursing mothers. However, it is not recommended for mothers who give birth by ceasing due to abdominal wounds. The bertuam process, like hot stone compression, requires more pressure.
According to the Ministry of Health (2017), for a normal birth with an episiotomy wound, many practitioners recommend the treatment to be performed after the wound has healed, which is within seven to ten days after delivery. Postnatal mothers who go through the process of giving birth by cesarean section should be patient because they need to wait for the cesarean wound to heal completely before undergoing this treatment (MOH, 2017).
Many practitioners use river stones that are usually obtained by themselves from upstream in hilly areas. (MOH, 2017). In addition, before using the hot stone compression, the tungku must be wrapped with several types of herbal leaves such as Alpinia galangal (lengkuas), Morinda citrifolia (mengkudu), Piper betle L. (sirih), and other herbs, and covered with fabric (Mohd Yusoff et al., 2018; Sator et al., 2022). The use of hot stone compression also has steps to be more effective (MOH, 2017).
In this study, the use of hot stone compression in traditional postpartum care is important for the mother's physical and mental recovery. This practice can provide many benefits to the mother, such as being able to improve blood circulation, remove wind from the body, and relieve muscle pain. The findings of this study prove that the use of hot stones in the postpartum care process is important for the mother's recovery.

5.1.2. Postpartum massage

The study found that 12 practitioners used postpartum massage during traditional care, highlighting its importance for mothers' physical and mental recovery. Practitioners must differentiate between normal and cesarean massage techniques.
The practitioner will decide which part of the body to massage. Starting at the top of the head and ending at the feet, the massage will be complete. Since it is thought that women's blood flow slows down after childbirth, which will result in body aches and weakness, massage therapy is important to speed up blood flow. For the best results, it is important to use the correct and appropriate massage technique (Mohd Yusoff et al., 2018).
Besides that, massage encourages stress release, pain treatment, and relaxation. All these benefits of postpartum massage also contribute to the new mother's quicker postpartum recovery and overall improved health (Johnson, 2023). The findings show that postpartum massage can help reduce back pain, muscle pain, and tension caused by pregnancy and birth. This includes relieving pain in the abdomen, waist, and other parts of the body that experience pressure during the birthing process. Not only that, but postpartum massage can stimulate breast milk production. By increasing blood circulation and easing tension, mothers may be more relaxed and able to breastfeed more effectively (Katmini & Sholichah, 2020).

In this study, postnatal massage was found to be very important to be done if the mother undergoes traditional postnatal care treatment. Practitioners know that every practice that is done brings benefits to the mother, and every massage technique that is done must be correct so that the mother gets the effectiveness of this practice. Not only that, but practitioners also know that the massage for mothers in normal labour and cesarean labor is different so as not to disturb the injured part of the abdomen.

5.1.3. Body wrapping

The study found that 12 practitioners emphasized the importance of wearing body wrapping during confinement for postpartum recovery, explaining its benefits and techniques.
The interview revealed various types of body wraps for postpartum care, including bengkung lilit, bengkung barut, bengkung modern, and bengkung Java (A Ida Farah, 2015). These wraps offer benefits like deflating the stomach, supporting the spine, and supporting the abdomen and uterus. The technique used should be easy for the mother to use, and those who give birth by ceasing should know how to avoid pain in the wound.
The body wrap aims to support the spine and abdomen. After carrying a baby for nine months, surely mothers will feel a change in their body posture (Sator et al., 2022). Mothers, after giving birth, will suffer from back pain due to carrying the weight of a baby in their bodies. A body wrap can help to correct posture and support the spine. So, the mothers will be able to move more easily, and the back pain experienced during pregnancy and childbirth can also be eliminated. In addition, the body wrap is also able to strengthen weak abdominal muscles due to stretching during pregnancy (Mohd Yusoff et al., 2018; Sator et al., 2022).
In this study, it was found that the use of body wraps in traditional postpartum care practices provides many physical and psychological benefits, but their use needs to be adapted to the mother's health condition. In addition, it was found that the use of a body wrap can accelerate the contraction of the uterus, support the abdominal muscles, maintain body posture, reduce bloating, and help shape the mother's body after childbirth.

5.1.4. Vaginal steam bath

The study revealed that most participants understood the use of vaginal steam baths, or tangas, in traditional postpartum care. However, three participants did not advocate for steam bath treatment during early labor due to potential harm to the mother.
The practitioners advise against using vaginal or tangas steam baths during the early postpartum period, particularly in the first and second weeks, as the mother's body is still weak and the wound hasn't fully healed. This practice could irritate the perineum wound and delay the recovery process. In addition, practitioners state that this vaginal steam bath has two different techniques, which are called wet tangas and dry tangas. The difference in this tanga's technique is only in the materials used, and it has the same benefits. The selection of this vaginal steam bath technique is according to the mother's comfort after giving birth (Azmi et al., 2019; Mohd Yusoff et al., 2018).
In this study, vaginal steam baths, or known as tangas is still practiced in traditional postpartum care. This practice can benefit mothers after childbirth during the recovery process because it can help in wound healing, reduce discomfort, and have a positive effect on perinatal health. However, its use needs to be done carefully and under controlled conditions, especially for mothers who have just given birth and those who experience birth complications.

5.1.5. Pilis

The study revealed that all twelve participants still practice pilis, a traditional Malay post-natal care method involving applying herbal ingredients to the mother's forehead after giving birth, providing mental and physical health benefits during confinement.
The participants stated that using pills during the period of abstinence can provide many benefits to the physical and mental health of the mother after giving birth. The use of pills can reduce headaches because the postpartum mother has lost a lot of blood during childbirth (Diah, 2023). Not only that, these pilis can also help give freshness, remove wind from the body, and give balance to the mother's body after giving birth. In addition, applying pilis on the mother's forehead after giving birth can give them peace during the confinement period. This is because the herbal ingredients used, such as turmeric, ginger, lemongrass, and lime, can have a cooling and soothing effect on the mother (Norbaiah Mat Yaacob, 2022). Practitioners also explained that to get a good effect, the mother needs to wear pilis for 3 or 4 hours, and do it every morning and night.
In this study, it was found that the use of pilis in the postpartum period is a traditional practice that is believed to help reduce headaches, calm the mind, prevent wind, and refresh the mother after giving birth. The use of pilis for postpartum care is still traditionally practiced to this day.

5.1.6. Param

The study reveals that not all participants understand the use of the param during abstinence, but 8 participants have a deep understanding of this practice.
The participants stated that Param is an herbal concoction applied to the mother's body, especially in the abdomen, waist, and legs. It can help warm the body, promote blood circulation, and reduce pain or fatigue from birth (Yuniantini & Nurvembrianti, 2022). Therefore, practitioners state that param is very important in Malay traditional treatment after childbirth because it helps speed up the recovery process of the mother's body. Furthermore, this practitioner explained that the ingredients to make this product usually consist of nutritious natural ingredients that have been used for generations. Among the main ingredients that are often used are ginger, galangal, turmeric, betel nut, and pandan leaves. Ginger is the most important ingredient because it has heating properties and helps improve blood circulation (Mustapha, 2022). This is important to ensure that the mother does not experience wind problems in the body, which often occur after childbirth.
In this study, it was found that practitioners still practice the use of paraffin in postpartum care, and this practice can have a positive effect in terms of increased energy, reduced body swelling, and a sense of comfort with the mother's body after childbirth. Overall, the use of param in postpartum care continues to be the main choice among communities that still practice traditional treatment.

5.1.7. Tapel

The findings of the study found that eleven participants understood the use of this tapel. The participants stated that this tapel is a type of herbal concoction that is applied to the abdomen. Its function is to shrink the uterus, remove wind in the body, and to make the stomach

feel more comfortable. In addition, the ingredients for making tapel consist of ingredients such as betel nut, tamarind, and some other herbs (Mustapha, 2022). Tapel can help in the internal recovery process and ensure the stomach returns to its original state faster (Laili, 2019). In addition, practitioners state that the use of tapel during the abstinence period can bring many benefits to the mother. The use of tapel helps restore the mother's energy by improving blood circulation. When the blood flows smoothly, the mother will feel more energetic and less lethargic. The effects of herbs in this tapel have warming properties that can give the body a fresh feeling.
This study found that the use of tapel in traditional postpartum care is still practiced to this day. Tapel is one of the traditional practices that has the potential to provide many benefits to mothers after childbirth.

5.1.8. Herbal bath

The study found that 12 participants stated that herbal baths during abstinence are crucial for recovery, a traditional practice in postpartum treatment in the Malay community. These baths use bath water mixed with healing herbs for physical and emotional support. The participants stated that herbal baths during the confinement period can bring many benefits to the mother. This herbal bath helps restore body energy, reduce wind in the body, and relax tense muscles after childbirth. It also speeds up the internal recovery process (Jahiman et al., 2021). According to the practitioner, they use a mixture of traditional herbs such as betel leaves, ginger, fragrant lemongrass, turmeric leaves, and kaffir lime. Practitioners also explained that each herb selected for this herbal bath has its benefits. For example, betel leaves help cleanse the body of toxins and remove wind thoroughly, and fragrant lemongrass provides a soothing aroma. However, to get a good effect, practitioners say this herbal bath needs to be done with the right technique. The technique is simple, but there are some important steps to follow. The first step is to prepare the herbs. This herbal bath uses herbs such as fragrant lemongrass leaves, ginger, pandan leaves, turmeric leaves, and kaffir lime (MOH, 2017). All these herbs are boiled in water for about 20 minutes. After the herbal water is warm, you can pour the water slowly on the body. Start from the head if comfortable, or start from the neck down. Make sure the boiled water hits the stomach, waist, and back because these parts are the most affected during childbirth.
This study found that herbal bathing after childbirth is a traditional practice that plays an important role in the physical and emotional recovery of mothers after giving birth. By using a variety of herbs that have healing properties, this practice helps reduce muscle pain, improve blood circulation, shrink the uterus, and refresh the body and mind. In addition to the physical benefits, herbal baths also have positive psychological effects, such as helping mothers overcome post-natal stress and fatigue.

5.1.9. Heat treatment (berdiang/bersalai)

The study revealed that two out of twelve participants no longer use heat treatment during postpartum practices. Referring to the interview that was conducted, the process of berdiang or bersalai is no longer practiced for safety reasons. Berdiang or Bersalai is a traditional practice that uses charcoal to warm the body after giving birth (Norbaiah Mat Yaacob, 2022). It is indeed effective in recovering the body, but there are some limitations in terms of safety and temperature control. Therefore, this practice is replaced by a sauna. The practitioner mentioned that saunas have several advantages. First, the temperature in the sauna can be controlled more accurately and safely. This means you don't have to worry about the overheating that can happen with embers. Second, saunas also provide a cleaner and more controlled environment. However, the practitioner stated that saunas and berdiang are both meant to warm up the body and help with the postpartum recovery process. The difference is that the sauna uses electronically controlled heat, while the fireplace uses coals that require more careful monitoring.
In this study, this practice is no longer applied to postpartum care because of safety factors. However, this practice is replaced by the sauna, which has the same advantages.

5.2. Dietary intake during postpartum practices

5.2.1. Traditional beliefs

The study found that nine participants have a deep understanding of postpartum dietary intake. Traditional beliefs emphasize the consumption of 'hot' food, herbal, and herb-based foods to promote recovery and energy restoration. Abstinence from 'cold' food, seafood, and 'windy' foods is crucial. This practice uses spices, herbs, and cooking methods to warm the body and support the mother's physical recovery.
The participants stated that the dietary practices according to this traditional belief have many taboos that need to be observed so that the mother's body does not get sick quickly when she is old (Barakbah, 2007). This study found that mothers after giving birth are only allowed to eat rice with dry dishes such as grilled fish, or dried fish, and they are also not allowed to drink too much plain water (MOH, 2017). Fried or oily food is believed to interfere with blood circulation and cause the accumulation of fat, which is not good for the mother during the confinement period. Not only that, Studies show that in many traditional cultures, abstinent mothers are prohibited from eating foods that are considered "cold," such as vegetables such as cabbage, kale, cucumber, and fruits such as watermelon and guava (Dennis et al., 2007; Jusoh & Ismail, 2022). These foods are believed to cause discomfort, such as flatulence, and delay the recovery process.
However, practitioners have mentioned that not all foods can be eaten by mothers after giving birth because of taboos; it's also because dietitians from the Ministry of Health say some types of food can harm mothers. Among the foods that can be harmful are fish, eel, and sea urchins, which can cause wounds on the stomach or a bleeding uterus. Therefore, the Malaysian Ministry of Health does not encourage mothers to eat these foods.
In addition, practitioners described the prohibition of eating food during the fasting period as not only practiced by the Malays, but Chinese and Indians also have prohibitions. Chinese people use a lot of ginger in cooking and drinks. They also cannot drink plain water during abstinence. They can only drink alcohol for abstinence. The Chinese will indeed make medicinal alcohol and put it in a jar. They need to drink during abstinence. They usually eat protein-rich foods such as chicken, fish, and meat. In addition, herbal soups such as dong quai root soup, red date soup, and ginger chicken soup are also very popular. Ginger is an important ingredient because it helps to warm the body and prevent the wind (Hishamshah et al., 2012; Mohd Yusoff et al., 2018; Naser et al., 2012).
The Indians emphasize the use of spices and herbs in their diet to help mothers recover after childbirth. One of the main dishes is fish or chicken curry cooked with lots of ginger, turmeric, and black pepper. Ginger and turmeric are very important because they help reduce inflammation and improve blood flow. As for drinks, they usually drink water cooked with spices such as turmeric water, ginger water, or herbal tea. In addition, milk mixed with turmeric is also very popular because it is believed to speed up recovery (Hishamshah et al., 2012; Mohd Yusoff et al., 2018; Naser et al., 2012).

Overall, dietary intake during postpartum care practices based on traditional beliefs plays an important role in accelerating the mother's physical and mental recovery, maintaining energy balance, and maintaining reproductive health. Although traditional practices such as the consumption of herbs and foods of a "hot" nature are proven to help in the recovery aspect, there are also taboos that, if followed strictly, can lead to a lack of essential nutrients.

5.2.2. Modern beliefs

The finding showed that eight participants have a deep understanding of the postpartum diet intake in terms of modern beliefs and are more focused on science-based, balanced nutrition. It promotes the intake of foods rich in nutrients such as protein, iron, calcium, and vitamins, as well as ensuring adequate hydration.

The participants stated that proper nutrition after delivery is very important to help the mother recover, give energy, and ensure sufficient milk production for the baby (Malhotra et al., 2022). Traditionally, postpartum nutrition involves foods that are rich in nutrients, easy to digest, and have warming properties to balance the mother's body. Chicken or fish soup cooked with herbs such as ginger, turmeric, and black pepper helps warm the body and improve blood circulation (de Castro et al., 2019). Drinks such as ginger decoction, honey, and hot milk help warm the body and increase energy. Adequate water intake is very important to ensure good hydration, especially for breastfeeding mothers. Water helps improve digestion, remove toxins from the body, and ensure adequate milk production. Mothers are advised to drink at least 8 glasses of water a day, or more if they are breastfeeding (Zhou et al., 2019). In addition, participants mentioned that forbidden food must be attractive so that the mother has an appetite to eat. Not only that, the practitioner explains that the way of eating at this time is concerned with increasing breast milk. Therefore, practitioners need to serve food that can increase breast milk, such as goat's milk, and encourage drinking enough plain water. Not only that, the participants described the method of cooking abstinent dishes as needing to be emphasized. Cooking methods for mothers after childbirth are not only baked or steamed, but the dishes can also be fried with a small amount of oil.

In this study, the modern postpartum nutritional approach emphasizes a balanced diet rich in essential nutrients to support maternal recovery, breast milk production, and maintain mental health. Modern nutrition is based on scientific studies and emphasizes the importance of flexibility in food selection, with an emphasis on adequate protein, vitamins, minerals, and hydration.

5.3. Education and information among practitioners

5.3.1. Practitioners' certificate

The study found that ten participants had more than 10 years of experience in the field of postpartum care. The majority of participants have SKM massage therapy certificates 3. The practitioner's qualifications in traditional postpartum care show that the practitioner's expertise and experience are significant in ensuring the safety and effectiveness of the treatment.

The participants stated that practitioners with SKM in postnatal care showed better ability in providing services based on traditional techniques, such as postnatal massage and the use of herbs, compared to those who did not have a formal certificate. Not only that, but these registered practitioners are also taught to first check the blood pressure of the mother after giving birth before starting the practice of postpartum care. Apart from that, with the level of expertise and qualifications available, practitioners can combine techniques to give more effectiveness to mothers. Concerning that, practitioners explained that there are several levels of qualifications and certificates in traditional postnatal care. Among them is that practitioners must at least obtain the Malaysian Skills Certificate (SKM) level 3 to become a practitioner in Malaysia. For practitioners who wish to further develop their careers, practitioners must take the Malaysian Skills Diploma (DKM) level 4 certificate to further strengthen their qualification level. Furthermore, to become an instructor at an institution related to postnatal care in this traditional way, practitioners need to continue their studies in the Malaysian Advanced Diploma of Skills. However, practitioners state that to register for this training under the National Population and Development Training (LPPKN), which is Mamacare, it is necessary to at least have skills in midwifery in traditional postnatal care. Most of these practitioners in Malaysia have experience in midwifery for over 10 years, but they just don't have a valid certificate. Therefore, to become a valid practitioner, they need to be registered under the Malaysian Certificate of Skills to obtain a massage therapy certificate.

In this study, formal qualifications, practical experience, and in-depth knowledge of postpartum maternal health are the main aspects prioritized in the study of traditional postpartum care practitioners.

5.3.2. Practitioners' knowledge

The findings of the study show that nine participants' knowledge of practitioners in traditional postpartum care shows that practitioner knowledge plays an important role in ensuring the well-being of mothers after childbirth.

Practitioners stated that traditional postpartum care practitioners have deep knowledge of practices that can help mothers recover after childbirth. This knowledge is the result of a combination of generations of experience, formal training, and a strong cultural and religious appreciation. Most of the practitioners have in-depth knowledge of mother and baby care and can handle every situation that arises. Not only that, participants stated that a practitioner needs to know the meaning of postpartum care before starting the service, which is traditional postpartum care, referring to methods that have been practiced for generations to help mothers recover after childbirth. It usually involves physical treatment, nutrition, as well as specific techniques that help speed up the recovery process, such as massage, bending, herbal baths, and appropriate dietary practices. Furthermore, to be a good practitioner, the practitioner must know what to do. and understand the tasks carried out. With that, this knowledge about the care of pregnant mothers is based on decades of experience as a village midwife. Through this experience, practitioners use their knowledge in managing mothers after childbirth.

5.3.3. Limitations

This research on traditional postpartum care practitioners has limitations, including a lack of references from journals and reading materials, potential conflicts with other sources, and potential exploitation due to inaccurate information and a lack of collaboration. The study also only focuses on selected practitioners from Klang Valley districts, not other states in Malaysia, and the findings can only be inferred from practitioners working in confinement centers across the nation. As the data comes from practitioners in the confinement center, the researcher cannot conclude the same findings for other industries. Further research is needed to address these limitations and improve understanding of postpartum care.

6. Conclusion

This study confirms that traditional postpartum care practices remain relevant in Malaysia, particularly massage, herbal therapy, body wraps, and dietary practices. These practices, which are embedded in local customs, nevertheless provide postpartum mothers with essential mental and physical care. However, incorporating these techniques into a regulated, evidence-based framework is important given the changing healthcare landscape. While modern adaptations such as sauna use and balanced meals demonstrate the response of practitioners to current needs, certified training programs are essential to enhance safety and professionalism. To ensure cultural relevance, professional quality, and equal access, health planners should investigate ways to incorporate traditional postpartum care into national maternal health recommendations. Future research should look at the accessibility of these practices, affordability, and long-term effects, particularly for underserved groups.

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