

- Title** Traditional Postnatal Care in Restoring Women's Physical and Mental Health
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Aim

To evaluate the evidence on effectiveness, safety and cost-effectiveness of traditional postnatal care which include postnatal deep tissue massage, breast massage, hot compression and body wrapping, in restoring women's physical and mental health.

Conclusions and results

There was limited retrievable evidence that suggests the effectiveness of traditional postnatal care in restoring women's physical and mental health.

A cross sectional study in Malaysia found that Malay traditional postpartum massage was shown to have protective effect against postpartum (postnatal) depression (PND). In a case report of a Malay woman who developed postpartum stroke and received series of Malay massage, the patient was found to have improvement in her speech and fine motor skills. Studies on other types of traditional postnatal massage found that postnatal massage seemed to have potential effect in reducing anxiety and stress level, improving quality of sleep and mental status among postnatal mothers. In terms of postnatal breast massage, no retrievable evidence was found among Malay mothers. However, two pre and post studies among Korean postnatal mothers found that breast massage may have benefits in relieving breast pain. Evidence on Malay hot compression and body wrapping among postnatal mothers found no statistically significant relationship between these practices and postnatal depression.

Recommendations (if any)

Traditional postnatal care (postnatal massage, breast massage) by trained personnel may be used to assist in restoring women's physical and mental health. However, outcome data should be collected.

Methods

Electronic databases were searched, which included PubMed, Medline, Journal @ Ovid full text via OVID, OVID EBM Reviews - Cochrane central register of controlled trials,

EBM Reviews - Cochrane database of systematic review, Embase and from non-scientific database - Google search engine. Search was also conducted through some official websites such as World Health Organisation (WHO), Traditional and Complementary Medicine Malaysia and INAHTA. In addition, a cross-referencing of the articles retrieved was also carried out. Relevant articles were critically appraised and evidence graded using US/Canadian Preventive Services Task Force.

Further research/reviews required

Traditional postnatal care is being widely practised among various cultural groups in Malaysia and around the world. Since there is paucity of evidence, further research is needed to assess its effectiveness, safety and cost-effectiveness.

Written by

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