

10th Conference on Health Care of the Chinese in North America

The Role of Culture and Tradition in the Care of the Chinese OB Patient

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Local Scope:

Approximately 40% of mothers delivering at CPMC have Asian surnames; 80% of these are Chinese Americans.

Goal:

To understand the Chinese mother in terms of her tradition and culture, so that we, the care providers, may give more appropriate and sensitive care.

Pregnancy & Birth:

Eastern Tradition vs. Western Technology
Belief Nature Logic Science

Foods:

1. Balance of Ying & Yang
2. "Hot" ie: ginger, seafood
3. "Cold" ie: certain fruits, vegetables
4. "Toxic" ie: crab, shrimp
5. Effect of preparation methods (on the above)
6. Medicinal & tonic foods.

Antepartum:

1. Rest
2. Abstinence
3. The maternal-fetal psychic connection:
 - embrace beauty
 - avoid witness to acts of destruction
4. Foods:
 - avoid "cold"
 - use tonics
5. A very strong GUILT response to adverse outcome: ie: 1st trimester miscarriage

Intrapartum:

1. Generally, a very "natural" approach.
2. Avoidance of:
 - medication
 - intervention
3. Concept of the "dry birth"
4. Conduction analgesia & the back pain connection.
5. Bonding (the immediate type) is not Chinese!

Post-Partum:

1. Avoidance of :
 - cold & wind
 - Water (bathing & shampooing)
 - Lochia contact
2. Foods: choose "Hot" ie: chicken wine; pig's feet vinegar soup
3. Lukewarm to breast feeding
4. Abstinence: traditionally, 100 days.
5. Contraceptive choices: favors barrier methods

The Post-Partum "Month of Isolation":

1. Actually a complete care plan shielding the newborn mother from perceived adverse environmental, social, and nutritional mishaps.
2. An explanation of what to do/ what not to do and why (see slide)

Practical Suggestions:

1. When offering fluids:
 - warm/hot, rather than cold
 - water may be preferred over juices
2. When offering foods:
 - allow her to choose
 - allow foods from home
3. Ask before:
 - using ice pack for episiotomy
 - shower/bath order
4. Offer plenty of blankets
5. Don't slap a wet baby on her bare chest
6. Forget about breast feeding "immediately"
7. Suggest laxative/stool softener
8. Barrier contraceptive preferred