

## Strengthening Health Literacy to Prevent Risky Traditional Practices in Postpartum Care

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### ABSTRACT

**Background :** This study explores the tradition of postpartum care on Ternate Island to improve the behavior of preventing risky practices in postpartum mothers of the Ternate tribe through health literacy by implementing an integration model of traditional and modern practices through mentoring postpartum mothers and mama biang. This study aims to understand the level of knowledge of postpartum mothers and mama biang regarding the risks of dangerous traditional practices during the postpartum period and how health literacy can play a role in improving the behavior of preventing risky practices in postpartum care.

**Method:** The method used in this study is the phenomenological method through focus group discussions (FGD) and in-depth interview techniques with 15 informants which aims to explore the informants' knowledge about the postpartum care tradition in the Ternate tribe. This study began in February-May 2024. Data collection used an unstructured interview questionnaire. The main theme was compiled to explore the knowledge of postpartum mothers and mama biang about the postpartum care tradition of the Ternate tribe.

**Results:** The results of the study showed that the knowledge of postpartum mothers and mama biang related to the risks of traditional practices during the postpartum period is still very limited. The themes identified include knowledge, risks of unsafe care, perceived impacts, motivation, supporting factors for prevention efforts, maintaining cultural identity. In principle, they stated that every tradition carried out in postpartum care is considered good for recovery after giving birth, but sometimes ignores the threat of health risks so that the existence of mama biang in this concept must be empowered in aspects that do not conflict with medical. The findings have implications for the need for a cultural communication strategy to wisely shift traditional activities that have a negative impact on maternal health through local authorities.

**Conclusion:** The conclusion of the results of this study is that it is necessary to improve health literacy among the people of Ternate Island, through the application of an integrated model of traditional and modern practices by providing training for assisting postpartum mothers and mama biang in order to improve behavior in preventing risky practices in postpartum care.

**Keywords:** Postpartum, Health Literacy, integration of traditional and modern practices, mama biang, Traditional postpartum care, Ternate Tribe

## INTRODUCTION

Postpartum is the period after giving birth, a condition in which the mother's body undergoes a process of recovery from the changes that occur during pregnancy and childbirth. This period begins after childbirth and lasts about 6 weeks, although each person can have a different experience. During the postpartum period, mothers experience many events such as physical, psychological changes and the possibility of postpartum complications so that early detection and proper care are needed, because it can endanger health or cause death for mothers during the postpartum period. (Reiza, 2018) The most common potential dangers are postpartum hemorrhage and infection. (Rahayu., S., I, Mudatsir, Hasballah., 2017) In Indonesia, the direct causes of maternal death are bleeding 45.20%, eclampsia 12.90%, abortion complications 11.10%, Postpartum sepsis 9.60%, prolonged labor 6.50%, anemia 1.60% while indirect causes of death are 14.10%. (Bersalin et al., 2021) Postpartum care practices aim to restore normal sexual and reproductive organ function, there are major changes that occur during the postpartum period in the body that determine the mother's well-being and healthy future expectations, but in society it is often inadequate due to cultural barriers, various risky postpartum practices still occur due to many sociocultural beliefs. (Kassie et al., 2022) New mothers and their families often rely on traditional forms of postpartum care that are rooted in social and cultural customs that have no logical basis and may even be potentially harmful in their practices. There are still many traditions that are not in line with the concept of health and are even very risky in contributing to high maternal mortality rates. (Abdul Ghani & Salehudin, 2018) (Sacks et al., 2022)

Interventions in maternal health services are continuously developed by the central government, but the achievement of indicators such as the Maternal Mortality Rate (MMR) in Indonesia is still high. On the other hand, the role of socio-culture has a primary value in certain communities. (Maryam, 2021) This directs research related to cultural practice behavior in postpartum care is still very important to study, Indonesia with a very large geographical area has no less than 520 ethnic groups and has very diverse local wisdom, including special ritual traditions or procedures that are commonly carried out during the postpartum period. (Mirawati et al., 2020) In the Ternate tribe tradition, a mother who has just given birth will be guided by a *mama biang* in undergoing traditional postpartum care. This tradition is believed to be important for recovery after giving birth, so the existence of *mama biang* in this concept must be empowered in aspects that do not conflict with medical. (Mariyati & Tumansery, 2018)

"*Mama biang*" is a term often used in several regions in Indonesia, especially in rural areas, to refer to a woman who acts as a shaman or caregiver who helps with postpartum care, especially during the postpartum period. "*Mama biang*" is usually considered a figure who is very experienced and knowledgeable in traditional medicine, especially related to postpartum maternal and infant care. The role of "*mama biang*" is very important in traditional societies, because in addition to providing physical care through massage, herbal concoctions, or other traditional healing methods, they also provide emotional and social support to new mothers. "*Mama biang*" usually have very close ties to the community, and are often trusted by the local community because of their experience and knowledge that has been passed down from generation to generation. In many cases, new mothers choose to be accompanied by "*mama biang*" because of the trust factor in their abilities and the comfort in carrying out traditions that have been carried out by previous generations. (Rahayu., S., I, Mudatsir, Hasballah., 2017) (Safitri et al., 2020) (Yufuai & Widadgo, 2018)

In order to open the minds and insights of the community, efforts need to be made to create awareness and ensure that they have the right information about risky traditional practices in the context of health literacy. This will enable them to take appropriate action to prevent such practices. (Saptandari, 2016) Therefore, this study describes efforts to prevent risky practices during the postpartum period in the context of health literacy. The description is complemented by the meaning and need for health literacy, the importance of culture-based efforts in preventing risks from dangerous traditional practices. (Usman & Sapril, 2018) This study examines the perspectives of postpartum mothers and mothers-in-law about traditional postpartum care practices on a small island in Indonesia. Furthermore, a phenomenological approach was used to explore emerging themes based on their perspectives. (Liu et al., 2022)

This research has obtained ethical approval from the Faculty of Public Health, Hasanuddin University, Makassar with the number: Number: 408/UN4.14.1/TP.01.02/2024, dated February 12, 2024.

The novelty of this study lies in the application of an integration model of traditional and modern practices to improve health literacy in postpartum mothers and *mama biang* on Ternate Island in preventing dangerous traditional postpartum care practices. This study not only identifies the low level of knowledge of postpartum mothers and *mama biang* but also develops health literacy-based interventions that have never been specifically applied to *mama biang* and postpartum mothers. Therefore, the questions to be answered through this study are (1). What are the socio-cultural aspects of traditional postpartum care practices? (2). How does health literacy influence the views of postpartum mothers and *mama biang* towards risky traditional practices?

## METHOD

This type of research is a qualitative approach with phenomenological design was used to explore the perspectives of postpartum mothers and mama biang on traditional practices in postpartum care. This design was considered appropriate in revealing the phenomenon and problems of risky traditional postpartum care practices at the research location, namely Ternate Island, located in the southern part of Ternate City, North Maluku Province, Indonesia. Efforts to ensure the accuracy of the research methods and findings were based on the following aspects: (1) Credibility aspects through extension of the observation period, increased persistence, and triangulation of data collection techniques, which included in-depth interviews, unstructured observations, discussions with traditional leaders, health workers, and member checks; (2) Transferability aspects through detailed, clear, and systematic explanations of the research methodology used; (3) Dependability aspects through member checks, equalizing perceptions (whether anyone helped in data collection), and training for observers; and (4) Conformability aspects through data verification, extension of the observation period, and triangulation of information sources.

## Informant

This study involved 15 informants selected purposively. For Focus Group Discussion, there were nine informants, consisting of 4 postpartum mothers, the inclusion criteria for postpartum informants were having given birth and undergoing traditional care during the postpartum period. The next informants were 3 mama biang and 2 village midwives. While informants for in-depth interviews consisted of 1 postpartum mother, 1 mama biang, 1 traditional leader and 3 health worker informants, where they were considered to understand the social situation and traditions of traditional postpartum care. so that the number of informants interviewed was 15 people. The characteristics of the informants are as follows:

focus group discussion (FGD) participants

Participant Code	Gender	Age	Education	Work
P 1	Woman	30	Junior High School	IRT (Postpartum Mother)
P 2	Woman	32	Junior High School	IRT (Postpartum Mother)
P 3	Woman	25	Senior High School	Honorary (Postpartum Mother)
P 4	Woman	31	Senior High School	IRT (Postpartum Mother)
P 5	Woman	28	3-year diploma	Village Midwife
P 6	Woman	56	Junior High School	IRT (Mom Biang)
P 7	Woman	59	Elementary School	IRT (Mom Biang)
P 8	Woman	49	Junior High School	IRT (Mama Biang)
P 9	Woman	39	Diploma 4	Village Midwife

Source: Primary data 2024

Table 1 presents the characteristics of FGD participants consisting of 9 people. All are female. Age range 25-59 years. The lowest education is elementary school and the highest is Diploma 3. The occupation of the participants is housewife, honorary and village midwife.

**Table 2.** Characteristics of In-depth Interview Informants regarding postpartum care practices Ternate tribe, on Ternate Island in 2024.

Informant Code	Gender	Age	Education	Work
N 1	P	32	SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL	Postpartum mother
N 2	P	52	JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL	Mom Biang
N 3	P	45	S1	Midwife Coordinator of Maternal and Child Health at the Community Health Center
N 4	P	42	S1	Head of Health Center

N 5	L	46	S1	Community Leader/Traditional Leader
N 6	P	56	S1	Head of Ternate City Health Service

Source: Primary data 2024

Table 2 shows 6 people became informants in this study, 1 male and 5 female. The youngest age is 32 years old and the oldest is 56 years old. There is 1 informant with junior high school education, 1 with high school education and 4 informants with bachelor's degree education. 1 person works as the head of the Health Center, 1 person is a midwife coordinating maternal and child health, 1 person is the head of the Health Service, 1 person is a postpartum mother and 1 person is a mother biang.

### Instrument

The instruments used in this study included unstructured interview questionnaires, focus group discussion (FGD) guides, recorders and pens, and notebooks to document the interviews. Data were collected through three main techniques: in-depth interviews, focus group discussions (FGD), and observation. Interviews were conducted individually to collect detailed information about each informant's knowledge and experience related to risky traditional practices. The duration of the interview for each informant was 30-45 minutes. FGDs were used to obtain information from village midwives about the risks and prevention of harmful practices in traditional postpartum care. Observations were conducted during postpartum care activities to understand the social and cultural contexts that influence behavior in traditional care.

### Data analysis

conducted using NVIVO 12 Plus software through thematic analysis method. Data obtained from interviews and FGDs were coded, then grouped into main themes relevant to the research objectives. The analysis process began with transcription of interview and FGD results, followed by careful reading to identify emerging patterns and themes. These themes were then compared with existing literature and used to develop recommendations for health literacy-based interventions that are appropriate to the cultural context of the Ternate tribe.

### Results

Based on information traced to postpartum mothers to mother biang and people who have roles in the perspective of traditional high-risk care, the themes that emerged in the elaboration process can be seen in the following table.

**Table 3.** Results of data processing using Nvivo 12 plus the main themes that emerged are as follows:

Research questions	Subtheme	Theme
What kind of traditional care is done after giving birth?	Forms of practice carried out Materials and equipment used Terms of the type of care Risks of traditional treatments	Knowledge
Mother's motivation in carrying out traditional postpartum practices	Trust Respecting ancestral traditions The impact felt	Source of Motivation
Supporting factors in preventing risky practices in postpartum care	Family decision maker Prevention efforts maintain cultural values Handling cultural approaches	Kinship and family support Cultural identity/local wisdom

### Knowledge of traditional postpartum care practices is at risk

The findings from the interviews showed that the knowledge of postpartum mothers and mothers-in-law regarding safe postpartum care is still minimal, as can be seen from the descriptions found as follows:

- a. Postpartum mothers do not yet understand the signs & symptoms of risky practices carried out, types of risky practices during the postpartum period and have not been exposed to health information. Common complaints include dizziness, weakness, blistered skin as quoted from the statement of the postpartum mother:

"... "The taste is delicious.. the body is fresh after grilling.. It's just that sometimes you get a headache if you leave it on the fire for too long" (N1)"

"..." If I get Bakera Kong, it'll take a long time... I think I'll just stick it out, with my second child, I'll have to work as a laborer until I'm like Malopo" (N2)

"... if you're too lazy to eat, you'll be sick and dizzy because there's fire too (N3)"

- b. The complaints experienced are considered normal and a sign that the ritual has a good effect, as quoted from the following statement:

"... If a lot of blood comes out, that's good, it's clean without a child after giving birth, too, (N1)"

"... Those pillow girls have to get out if they don't have enough sake (N2)"

"... the reason is that if you don't get proper care, your mother won't be fresh and won't be strong enough to do activities (N3)"

"... for a long time on the fire, if people say it's even better because the pillow has blood coming out of it (N4)"

- c. The most common risks as quoted from the following statement:

"... Just guard the wound by applying turmeric mixed with oil to the birth canal wound, the wound takes a long time to heal (N1)"

"...that's when Tara Poha Depe Bobou usually drinks Rorano and after getting it they vomit (N3)"

"... Tara knows that it's dangerous (N2)"

"...had a postpartum visit and the perineal stitches came loose due to bleeding" (N4)

- d. Mama biang still applies postpartum treatment that does not meet the right standards and there are traditional treatments that are contrary to medical standards. The treatment practices carried out by mama biang are by returning to the quote from the following statement:

"... Use 5 pieces of stone, burn it until it's red then put the uba kong dorang bakera on it (N2)"

"... Usually they can order the people to drink the water and the inner sanctum using the Paser Sungara in the morning and evening (N3)"

The most effective traditional treatment is to follow the quote from the following statement:

"... they gave me a smell first, then after that I smelled the same body, it felt like my body was being tapped after that (N1)"

"... someone takes care of the rubus and then the baukup is like that until the dong basuar, that's the case when the mucus comes out in the body (N2)"

### **Motivation of postpartum mothers and mother birth attendants in preventing traditional postpartum care practices**

The findings from the interviews show that the source of motivation for postpartum mothers and mama biang is a supporting factor for carrying out traditional care as seen from the description of the themes found as follows:

- a. Motivation comes from within themselves, and also from their families.

The following is an excerpt from the informant's statement:

"... Yes, that is what I want from myself because I see everyone like that, there are many people who benefits (N1)"

"... try ngonni kase comparing people who bakera, barahu with tarada,, it's definitely different... this is biking tong strong with bobou (N2)"

"... this is iko for ordinary parents, tara is fine if tara is biking (N4)"

"... it has become a tradition passed down from our ancestors (N5)"

- b. The source of motivation from the family has the keyword family with a quote from the following statement:

"...support definitely comes from family, especially parents (N6)"

"... back to the family decision because Tara can't do anything if she's told to do something like that, (N2)"

"... I like it when after giving birth the family gets together to take care of our father, (N3)"

"... for us here, it's normal for us to give birth directly to our mothers who are the ones who work for them (N4)"

"...the family pays full attention to the mother who has given birth by asking the mother to take care of them during the postpartum period (N5)"

- c. Motivation is influenced by supporting factors such as habit factors and cultural beliefs. The following is a quote from the informant's statement:

Factors that trigger motivation have the keywords tradition, habits and also beliefs. the following statement sentence:

"... Basically, it's become normal for them here, they have to be careful with other things after giving birth (N4)"

"... so this has become a tradition passed down from generation to generation, there are benefits but there are also dangers (N6)"

"... That's so that we are healthy, slim because we are pregnant without children, so we are not pregnant (N1)"

"... It's a good feeling because you can do something else... so far you're safe (N2)"

"... so far I have seen that everyone is healthy without any problems, in fact my people are strong, Lia tuu (N5)"

### Supporting factors to prevent risky traditional practices

The findings from the interview results show that the informants were postpartum mothers and mothers who gave birth. This can be seen from the description of the themes found as follows:

- a. The most frequently expressed beliefs of mothers in preventing the effects of postpartum care practices are quoted as follows:  
"... my experience with my mother was that blood flowed out a lot, so I took care of it again if you were staying for a long time at Panta Puru (N1)"  
"... If they give birth by caesarean section, we won't do anything to them until we wait for the wound to dry (N2)"  
"... if they provide traditional treatment like this, they will be on duty as midwife check-ups again (N3)"  
"This tradition is so ba root for people, so if you want to ask for it, it's a bit difficult, unless you are trained, then you just know which treatments are allowed, traditions that are safe for your health, just keep going (N5)"
- b. Coping with cultural methods is a theme formed from the subtheme of preventing disease during the postpartum period. The following is an excerpt from the respondent's statement:  
"... the pain in my body disappeared because I got lice when I gave birth (N1)"  
"...Bakera, barahu, the smell of all of us in the treatment is definitely in our goal of being healthy quickly after giving birth (N2)"

## DISCUSSION

### Knowledge of traditional postpartum care practices is at risk

The knowledge of postpartum mothers and mama biang regarding traditional postpartum care practices in the Ternate community plays a significant role in determining the extent to which these practices pose a risk to the health of mothers and babies. (Rahayu., S., I, Mudatsir, Hasballah., 2017) Based on the results of this study, it was found that although postpartum mothers and mama biang had sufficient knowledge about postpartum care traditions, most of them were not aware of the potential risks that could arise from these practices. This reflects a knowledge gap that must be addressed to prevent negative impacts on the health of postpartum mothers. (Safitri et al., 2020) (Bij De Vaate et al., 2002) (Ayaz & Yaman Efe, 2008) (Ding et al., 2018)

Traditional postpartum care practices in the Ternate community, such as the use of herbal concoctions, massage, and body care with natural ingredients, have indeed become part of the local culture that has been accepted for generations. However, research shows that some of the ingredients used in this treatment have the potential to cause infections or allergic reactions. For example, the use of non-standardized herbal concoctions can cause dangerous side effects for the body of the postpartum mother, especially if there is no adequate medical supervision. (Maryam, 2021) (Rahayu., S., I, Mudatsir, Hasballah., 2017)

Knowledge of the benefits and risks of traditional postpartum care also depends on the extent to which the mama biang as a traditional nurse has an understanding of the medical aspects of postpartum care. Although mama biang are often respected and trusted as sources of knowledge in the community, previous research results show that many mama biang are not trained in basic medical principles such as prevention of postpartum infections and complications. This suggests the need for further training for mama biang so that they can better understand the potential risks and be more careful in providing care to postpartum mothers. (Saptandari, 2016) (Usman & Sapril, 2018) (Mirawati et al., 2020) .

A relevant public health theory to support these findings is the health belief model which states that individuals' knowledge and awareness of health risks influence their decisions to perform or avoid a health practice (Rosenstock, 1974). In this context, although postpartum mothers and mama biang have cultural knowledge about postpartum care, their low understanding of the medical impact of the practice can contribute to the occurrence of health risks. Therefore, a more holistic approach to socializing medical knowledge related to postpartum care is essential to reduce risks. (Birhane et al., 2022)

In addition, research on postpartum care practices in several other regions in Indonesia shows that the introduction and implementation of safer and more effective evidence-based postpartum care can reduce postpartum complications. (Reiza, 2018) Therefore, a combination of local wisdom and evidence-based medical knowledge is important to be implemented in the community, so that traditional postpartum care practices can provide optimal benefits without causing dangerous health risks. (Coast et al., 2016) (Mahiti et al., 2017)

Overall, the results of this study underscore the importance of increasing knowledge about safe and low-risk traditional postpartum care for both postpartum mothers and mama biang. Further training, as well as education about the medical risks associated with traditional practices, are needed to create synergy between local traditions and more modern health standards. (Bennardo, 2018) (Sellevoid et al., 2022)

This discussion section emphasizes the importance of awareness of the health risks that traditional postpartum care can pose, as well as the importance of training and education for the community regarding safe and evidence-based practices. (Asmuji & Indriyani, 2016)

**Motivation of postpartum mothers and mother birth attendants in preventing traditional postpartum care practices**

In the context of traditional postpartum care in the Ternate community, motivation to change risky care behavior is very important to reduce negative impacts on health. Most postpartum mothers and *mama biang* feel that traditional care is something that has been proven for generations and provides comfort and confidence. However, the lack of understanding of the medical aspects and potential dangers that may arise indicates the importance of increasing knowledge related to postpartum care practices. (Ayaz & Yaman Efe, 2008). Although *mama biang* have a highly respected role in society, they often do not receive adequate medical training or education to identify and address the risks associated with the practice. This has the potential to increase the risk for postpartum mothers and newborns. (Dibari et al., 2014) (Rossier & Hellen, 2014)

The motivation of postpartum mothers and *mama biang* to prevent risky traditional postpartum care practices is closely related to the knowledge and awareness factors of the dangers that can be caused. In this context, the Health Belief Model theory proposed by Rosenstock (1974) is very relevant. This model explains that individuals will be motivated to make changes in health behavior if they are aware of threats to their health and believe that the actions taken can reduce these threats. In this case, adequate knowledge of the health risks of traditional practices can increase the awareness of postpartum mothers and *mama biang* to choose safer alternatives, such as evidence-based medical care. (Poon et al., 2021) (Merga et al., 2022)

Furthermore, motivation to prevent risky practices is also influenced by social and cultural factors. Previous studies have found that postpartum care practices that have become traditions are often difficult to change because people have a strong belief in the efficacy of traditional methods. (Bala & Roets, 2022) However, the study also showed that counseling involving community leaders, including *mama biang*, can help change views and reduce dependence on traditional practices that are not scientifically proven. Therefore, the involvement of *mama biang* in education about the importance of safe and evidence-based postpartum care is very important. (Tsfay et al., 2022) (Ramulondi et al., 2021)

In addition, motivation to prevent risky postpartum care practices can also be obtained through a community empowerment approach involving postpartum mothers, *mama biang*, and health workers in open discussions about postpartum care options (Chang, 2018). This model not only prioritizes the provision of medical information, but also takes into account local values and wisdom that apply in the community. This is in line with research showing that when postpartum mothers and *mama biang* are given space to understand the benefits and risks of the care they choose, they tend to be more open to behavioral changes and choose safer practices. (Usman & Sapril, 2018) (Maryam, 2021)

Overall, to reduce the risks posed by traditional postpartum care practices, it is essential to increase the knowledge of postpartum mothers and midwives regarding the dangers that can arise from some of these practices. Through the provision of evidence-based education and training involving midwives and counseling to postpartum mothers, awareness of safe care can be built. The motivation to avoid these risky practices will be stronger if postpartum mothers and midwives understand that safer and evidence-based medical care can prevent more serious postpartum complications, while maintaining existing local wisdom. (Merga et al., 2022) (Kimura et al., 2015) (Bala & Roets, 2022)

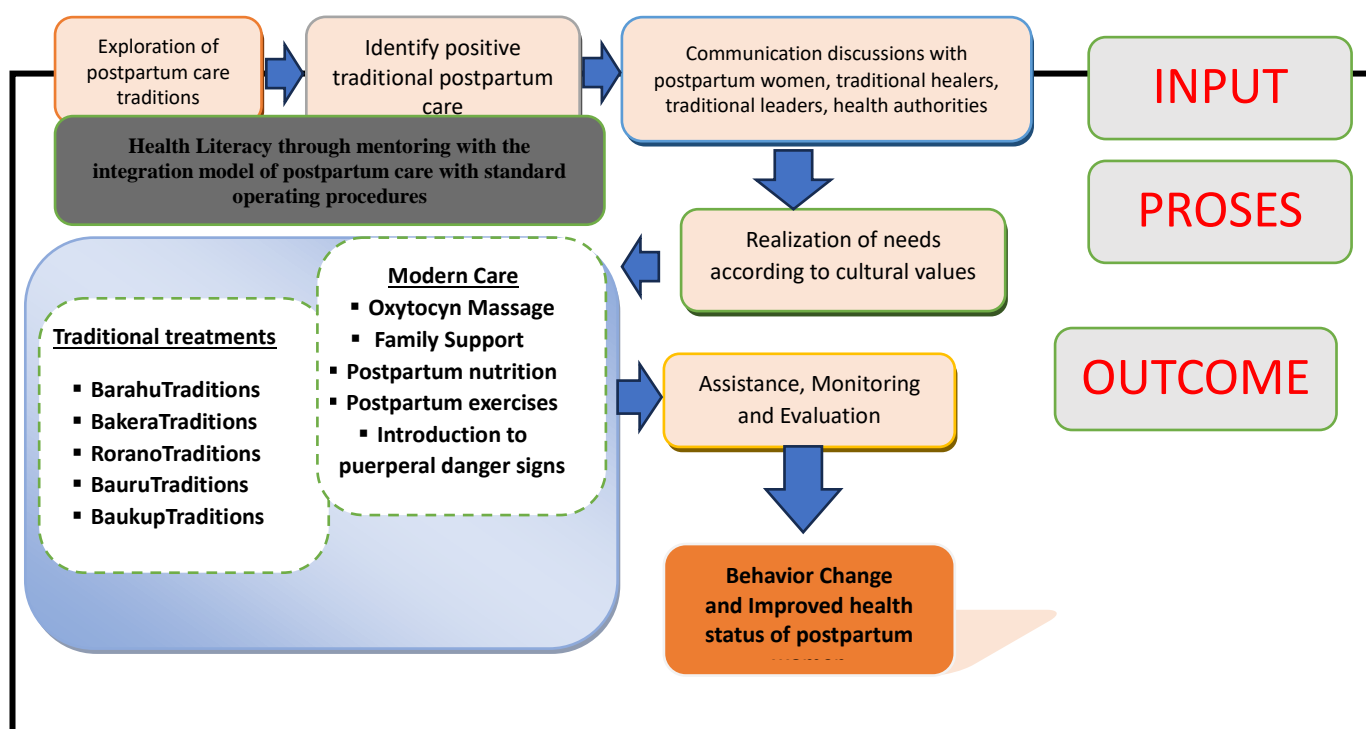
**Supporting factors to prevent risky traditional practices**

Traditional practices in postpartum care are part of the cultural heritage that has long been carried out in various communities, including the Ternate Tribe, because they are closely related to local culture, values, and beliefs. However, some practices can increase the risk to maternal and infant health. Therefore, efforts to prevent risky traditional practices require a comprehensive approach (Ramulondi et al., 2021). Supporting factors include 1). Culture-based health education plays an important role in preventing risky practices. The information provided must be relevant, easy to understand, and able to explain the risks of certain practices. A study by Widayati et al. (2020) showed that a culture-based health education program increased postpartum mothers' awareness of the importance of medical care. 2) The role of culturally sensitive health workers also plays an important role as a bridge between tradition and modern medical practice. Their understanding of local cultural values can help build community trust. Research by Kadir et al. (2021) in Ternate showed that postpartum mothers were more receptive to health advice from health workers who understood their culture. 3) Support from family and community leaders has a major influence on care decisions. Their support can strengthen the acceptance of modern health practices. Susilowati (2019) found that involving community leaders in health education increased postpartum mothers' compliance with medical advice. 4). Policies that support maternal health through a community-based approach can help reduce risky traditional practices. Programs such as Posyandu and empowering village midwives are effective examples and 5). empowering women is an important element in preventing risky traditional practices. (Sanchez-Garcia et al., 2022) (Andhikatis, 2021) An approach that respects local culture while introducing evidence-based practices will be more effective and sustainable. In addition, women with higher levels of education tend to choose safe and evidence-based health care practices. (Li et al., 2022) (Sultan et al., 2022) (Lim et al., 2020)

### Health Literacy and Changes in Traditional Postpartum Care Behavior

Health literacy is an individual's ability to understand, evaluate, and use health information to make informed decisions in maintaining well-being (El Ayadi et al., 2022). In the context of traditional postpartum care, health literacy is key to helping postpartum mothers understand the risks of certain traditional practices and directing them to safer, evidence-based practices (Asmuji & Indriyani, 2016) (Barnes et al., 2022). The Health Belief Model (HBM) theory explains that individuals will be more motivated to change behavior if they are aware of the risks of unsafe practices, understand the benefits of change, and feel able to do so (Poureslami et al., 2021). In this case, health literacy acts as a foundation for building awareness and encouraging behavior change. By increasing health literacy, individuals can move from the stage of risk unawareness to adopting healthy behaviors. In addition, postpartum mothers with higher levels of health literacy tend to avoid traditional practices such as tight abdominal wrapping because they understand its impact on health. (Grylka-Baeschlin et al., 2014) (Wagner et al., 2020) (Poureslami et al., 2021) (Asmuji. & Diyan, 2014)

The following is a health literacy scheme for preventing risky traditional practices during the postpartum period that has been carried out (see framework box).



**Figure 1.** Health literacy scheme model for preventing risky traditional practices during the postpartum period

Based on the scheme in Figure 1, it is explained in this model that health literacy related to preventing risky traditional practices during the postpartum period is an important strategy to reduce cultural resistance. By respecting and understanding traditional values, this approach is more likely to be accepted by the community, thus encouraging gradual behavioral change. (Wagner et al., 2020) (Asmuji & Indriyani, 2016)

This health literacy model is designed to increase knowledge and awareness of postpartum mothers through an integrated mentoring approach. This approach combines traditional practices with standard operating procedures for modern health care. On the one hand, traditions such as Bakera, Rorano, Bauru, and Baukup are still valued as part of local culture, but are accompanied by education to identify risks that may arise from their implementation. On the other hand, health literacy includes recognizing danger signs during the postpartum period, fulfilling postpartum mothers' nutritional needs, and the importance of physical activity such as postpartum gymnastics. (Dauber et al., 2022)(Barnes et al., 2022)

This approach also emphasizes family support as a key element in the success of health literacy. Families are invited to be actively involved in ensuring that postpartum mothers receive appropriate care and support their well-being. With the synergy between tradition and modern care, this model aims to minimize risky practices while promoting holistic maternal and infant health. (Poureslami et al., 2021) (Asmuji. & Diyan, 2014)



### Limitations

The time constraints of this study, which only lasted for a few months (January to July 2024), were not sufficient to capture long-term behavioral changes or knowledge development of postpartum mothers and *mama biang*. Behavioral changes and improvements in health literacy usually take longer to manifest and be measured accurately. The involvement of research participants tends to be limited to postpartum mothers and *mama biang*. Other factors, such as the role of family or community leaders, may have significant influences but have not been explored in depth. In addition, the unique culture and society of the Ternate tribe do not fully apply to other communities in Indonesia. Therefore, the application of the results of this study to other populations must be done with careful consideration of cultural differences.

### CONCLUSION

The conclusion of this study is that the level of knowledge of postpartum mothers and Ternate tribe *mama biang* on Ternate Island about the risks of unsafe traditional care is still low. This can contribute to maternal morbidity and mortality. This study shows that the implementation of health literacy during the postpartum period is a strategic step to prevent risky care practices. By increasing the understanding of postpartum mothers about the importance of science-based care, the risk of health complications can be minimized. The integration model of traditional and modern care practices has proven to be an effective solution, because it is able to accommodate local cultural values while ensuring the implementation of safe medical standards.

Through this approach, traditional health-promoting care practices can be maintained, while risky practices can be avoided. The key to success lies in ongoing education, collaboration with health workers, and active community participation to create an environment that supports maternal and infant health. The study also emphasizes the importance of culturally tailored interventions that support integration between culture and formal services, which is not harmful. Thus, this integration not only promotes physical health, but also improves the quality of life of postpartum mothers as a whole.

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