

Determining the traditional methods used by newborn women by giving birth: a descriptive study

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ABSTRACT

Objectives: This study was carried out to determine the traditional practices that women who have just given birth apply to their babies.

Methods: The research is descriptive. The participants were recruited from women who had just given birth to 198 women in a maternity hospital. The data was collected through the personal information form. The chi-square test was used to plan the categorical data in detail as the mean of the research data, as numbers, and as percentages. $p < 0.05$ was accepted as meaning.

Results: It was determined that traditional practices frequently used by women; The use of the yellow blanket against jaundice, swaddling so that the waist does not sink in, staying warm, being hard as steel, and having straight legs and the use of salt. It was determined that these practices were applied more by mothers who graduated from primary school. Although the frequency of use of applications such as burying the belly in the garden and throwing it in the water was found to be significant by age, it was determined to be used more in the group aged 31 and over. It has been determined that wearing evil eye beads is more common among mothers under the age of 25.

Conclusions: In our study, it was observed that traditional practices were widely applied in the neonatal period. Newborn health should be supported by providing continuous midwifery care to women, education, and health checks.

Keywords: Newborn, newborn care, traditional practices, culture

Birth has been accepted as a pleasing situation in every age and everywhere, and being a parent has increased the dignity of the individual in society. The relationship between health, culture, and religious belief is very important in the realization of women's health behaviors [1]. Healthcare professionals need to focus on traditional practices that can have an impact on maternal and child health practices. Families often

resort to traditional methods if they cannot access or provide health care or maintenance management with modern methods. Especially in many cultures, traditional practices for maternal and child health are known [2, 3].

Tradition is a term that encompasses cultural values, habits, and behaviors transmitted from generation to generation. Traditions affect people's lifestyles. Ac-

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cordingly, the health status of people can be affected by traditions [4].

In underdeveloped, developing countries and traditional societies, they try to solve their health problems themselves and resort to traditional practices more frequently when the health service is inadequate and access to health services is difficult. Pressure from family elders and spouses, accepting the problems seen in the postpartum period as a normal situation, women's place in society, economic deficiencies, inability to reach health centers immediately, religious beliefs, lack of trust in health personnel, lack of health insurance, etc. It is not possible to go to any health institution unless it is necessary for reasons. For such reasons, individuals try to solve their health problems with traditional methods that they have seen from their families and relatives [5].

The issue of public health has covered the importance of newborn health. Parents who assume the first responsibility for the care of babies in newborn health, should be closely related to the knowledge, attitudes, and practices related to newborn care [6]. The services applied according to the modern health understanding have been examined and defined as preventive, restorative, and rehabilitation services in general health [7]. According to the developments in health services; the beliefs and practices of the traditional period continue among the people.

Turkish culture has also been under the influence of different beliefs and cultures due to the traces of the geography, cultural richness, and the influence of religions. While these practices arising from beliefs sometimes do not affect human health, its sometimes affect public health positively or negatively. However, it is undoubtedly the newborns who are most vulnerable and unprotected from the applications. Newborns are under the influence of the practices existing in the culture of the society they live in, and in time, newborns adapt to this culture and reflect their behaviors [8, 9].

The neonatal period includes the first four weeks or the first 28 days following the birth of the baby. It is the neonatal period with the highest mortality rate in childhood. It is important to provide routine health checks and home care during the newborn period and to inform family members about newborn care [4]. Traditional practices for nutrition, hygiene, jaundice, and general care are carried out after the birth of the

newborn in Turkey [9]. Although these practices differ according to culture, region, and religious beliefs, it is known that they are frequently applied in Anatolian Asian regions. An example of these applications, giving sugary water, not giving colostrum [10], not breastfeeding until a few hours after the birth of the newborn or until the three azan times have passed [11], and giving water to the newborn after each feeding [12], for care; applying honey, giving lemon juice in case of hiccups, praying for mothers to protect newborns from the evil eye, wearing blue beads, wiping the mouth of their babies with carbonated water or soda, powder, soap, salting and applying margarine or olive oil when the newborn has a rash [13], not to take a bath until the navel drops, to remove the host and to prevent it, to wait for a few hours for the crusts to soften by applying olive oil, baby oil Vaseline to the baby's head [11], o put a höllük (covering with parched earth) under the newborn, to apply cologne or olive oil so that the navel of the newborn falls off as soon as possible. two women in their forties do not visit each other to prevent and protect them from flushing [14], if newborn flushing occurs, red gauze covers the face of the newborn, they have the teacher read it, they use amulets, bathing the newborn 7 days, 20 days and 40 days after birth [15], The nails are not cut until the newborn is forty days old, and if they are cut, it is thought to be a thief. When the baby is forty days old, the tradition of clipping is to first wash the newborn and then the newborn's laundry with forty-stone water, and finally to wash the mother, to use flour for bleaching or to take a bath with 40 eggshell water [10]. To prevent the newborn from developing jaundice, bathing with egg yolk, drinking mineral water and covering himself with a yellow cloth [15], bathing with gold water, giving herbal drinks and making the newborn drink his own urine, wearing gold to eliminate neonatal jaundice, wearing yellow clothes, wrists and tying a yellow thread around the neck, draining blood from the heel with a razor blade, cutting behind the ear or under the tongue, making an incision in the middle of the two eyebrows of the newborn, washing with poppy juice and feeding chicken liver [12], keeping the fluorescent lamp on to prevent neonatal jaundice [16], allowing the face of the newborn to cover the writing, to wrap a newspaper with gas oil on the back of the newborn when coughing [17]. Other applications made are; applying indigo on the fontanelle,

wrapping the soil under the newborn, putting the mother's hair in the mouth of the newborn with thrush, tying a shrine cloth in the crib to prevent the newborn from getting evil eye, adding basil, blueberry, chamomile, rose and some salt to the bath water, collecting his laundry before the evening prayer time, such as wearing a lock [16, 18], applying bat blood to prevent hair in the perineum and armpits when the newborn grows up, not taking the newborn out for forty days and not showing it to anyone [19, 20] is in the form.

While some of the methods and applications applied to the newborn in the postpartum period do not cause any negative effects on the health, some affect the newborn health negatively. Give the newborn mineral water, sugar water, honey, etc. such as feeding, swaddling, salting, placing foreign materials such as foreign currency in the belly, prolonging breastfeeding, not giving the first milk, etc. Practices such as these can have a negative effect on newborn health. However, practices such as keeping the newborn away from unknown people, not being left alone, being with his mother, singing lullabies can have positive effects on newborn health [4].

As stated in the literature; women trying to find solutions to some of their problems in the postpartum period by doing the traditional practices they have seen in their own families, especially trying this on newborns may bring some negative results. With this study, it is aimed to determine the practices made, to replace the behaviors that may cause negative results with beneficial behaviors, and to contribute to the literature for midwives and gynecology nurses who are service providers.

METHODS

Participants

The population of the research consists of women who gave birth. Women who were hospitalized in the delivery room and gynecology service of a maternity and children's hospital of a hospital affiliated to the provincial health directorate in the Mediterranean region and who met the criteria for inclusion in the study were included. There were 7413 births registered for 2021 in the hospital where the research was conducted. The minimum sample size was calculated as 191 when the

95% confidence interval, 5% margin of error, and the traditional application frequency to the newborn were 15% using the population-specific sampling method [21]. The study was carried out cross-sectionally between 20.07.2021 and 20.10.2021 with a total of 198 women who gave live birth and volunteered to participate in the study. This study is inclusion criteria; 18 years and over, able to speak and understand Turkish, had at least 1 live birth, to be voluntary, without a mental illness and who did not meet this criteria was not included this study.

Data collection

The data were collected using the "Personal Information Form (4 questions) prepared by the researchers by scanning the literature, and the questionnaire form in which traditional practices were questioned (19 questions). The pre-trial of the questionnaire used to collect data was applied to 20 women who gave birth in a private hospital and necessary corrections were made. The data of the women who filled out the questionnaire completely and volunteered to participate in the research were evaluated.

Ethical statement

Ethical approval for the study was obtained from the Clinical Research Ethics Committee (Date/No:2021/02). In addition, informed consent was obtained from women to participate in the study within the scope of the Declaration of Helsinki. In addition, the women participating in the study were informed that they could withdraw from the study at any time.

Statistical Analysis

Data analysis was performed using SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Science) 22.0 package program. Study data did not show a normal distribution. The chi-square test was used to compare numbers, percentage distributions and data. The results were evaluated within the 95% confidence interval, and $p < 0.05$ was accepted as statistically significant.

RESULTS

The mean age of the women participating in the study was 30.69 ± 8.53 years (min: 17, max: 63). 32.8% of the mothers reported that they were primary school

Table 1. Some traditional practice according to purposes

Traditional Practices for Nutrition	n	%
Waiting for three adhans to feed the newborn	3	1.5
Not giving the first milk (colostrum) of the newborn	29	14.9
Giving the newborn sugar water as the first food	33	16.9
Putting dates in the mouth of the newborn	21	10.8
Giving the newborn a teaspoon of zamzam first	36	18.5
Applications for Maintenance		
Remove forty	161	82.6
Not rubbing anything into the belly	55	28.2
Belly powder smearing	10	5.1
Burning cloth and smearing its ash	4	2.1
Rubbing oily dough	1	0.5
Saltwater-oil ploughing	11	5.6
Applying olive oil to the belly	191	97.9
Burying the belly in the courtyard of the mosque	84	43.1
Burying the belly in the schoolyard	52	26.7
Burying the belly in the garden	38	19.5
Storing the belly at home	45	23.1
Throwing the belly into the water	7	3.6
Burying in a place where there is no foot	29	14.9
Throwing the girl's home and the boy's outside	11	5.6
Cloth tie	94	48.2
Laying a hölluk under it	10	5.1
Salt	118	60.5
Arson	110	56.4
Giving herbal tea for gas pains	20	10.3
Cutting your nail after forty	20	10.3
Using a yellow dressing to remove jaundice	141	72.3
Applying clay for diaper rash	150	76.9
Squeezing the nose of the newborn	59	30.3

graduates and 7.7% of them were university graduates. 5.1% of those who put a hole 1.5% so that it does not get nappy rash, so that it gets its strength from the soil, 4.1% without gas pains, 3.1% for easy cleaning, 5.6% of those who take the placenta and throw it into the water, 60% of those who salt the newborn reported that they salt it so that it does not smell bad. For those who swaddle 53.8% to have straight legs, 31.8% to be hard as steel, 48.7% to keep their body temperature warm, 53.4% to sleep comfortably, and 25.6% to keep their backs from sinking; It has been reported that anise (21.5), fennel (9.2) linden (2.6), cumin (12.3) water is drunk to relieve gas pain. Wearing gold (21.5%) for jaundice, washing with gold-filled water (5.1%). Reading prayers to protect from the evil eye 75.4%, wearing evil eye beads 24.6%, wearing eggshells 2.6%, 36.4% having the teacher read it, 8.2% making amulets, 4.6% rubbing the hair of a woman with two pregnancies, rubbing soda in the baby's mouth 19.5%, applying sugar 7.7%, applying olive oil to remove diaper rash 50.3%; It has been reported that 49.7% of those who apply powder are applied. Applications such as applying eyeliner to the eyes 6.7% and applying almond oil 5.6% have been reported to make the newborn beautiful (Table 1).

While applications such as burying the belly in the garden and throwing it into the water were found to be significant according to age, it was determined that they were used more in the 31 and over group. It has been determined that wearing evil eye beads is more common in mothers under the age of 25 (Table 2). It was determined that mothers who graduated from primary school practiced using a yellow cover to get rid of jaundice, swaddling to keep the waist from sinking, swaddling to keep warm, swaddling and salting so that they are hard as steel and their legs are straight (Table 3).

DISCUSSION

In this study, 32.8% of the mothers reported that they were primary school graduates and 7.7% of them were university graduates. The educational status statistics of our research were similar to the similar studies in the literature and the TNSA 2018 data [21, 22].

It was determined that 14.9% of the women did not give the newborn's first milk (colostrum), and it

Table 2. Comparison of age groups and some traditional applications

Traditional applications	Age groups		
	< 25 years old n (%)	25-30 n (%)	31 and up n (%)
Burying the belly in the garden			
Yes	4 (10.5)	12 (31.6)	22 (52.9)
No	50 (31.8)	45 (28.7)	62 (39.5)
X ² / p value*	7.517/0.017		
Throwing the belly into the water			
Yes	1 (14.3)	0 (0.0)	6 (85.7)
No	53 (28.2)	57 (30.3)	78 (41.5)
X ² / p value*	5.658/0.048		
Tie a cloth under it			
Yes	19 (20.2)	24 (25.5)	51 (54.3)
No	35 (34.7)	33 (32.7)	33 (32.7)
X ² / p value*	9.780/0.007		
Wearing an evil eye bead			
Yes	20 (42.6)	9 (19.1)	18 (38.3)
No	34 (23.0)	48 (32.4)	66 (44.6)
X ² / p value*	7.420/0.028		

*Chi-square test, $p < 0.05$

was also observed that 46.2% gave the baby foods other than breast milk such as zamzam, date and sugar water. Most common traditional practices in our study, it was determined that 60.5% salted their baby, 72.3% covered the newborn with a yellow cover to remove jaundice, 82.6% of them brought their fortieth off, 97.9% applied olive oil to their navel. Uysal *et al.* In their study with women who applied to a family health center in a different city to determine the traditional practices of parents with 0-12 month old babies, it was stated that 62.3% of women milked and emptied colostrum and did not give it to the newborn. 80% salt their baby; 12.1% covered the yellow cover for neonatal jaundice, and 60.9% washed with egg yolk; It was stated that 56.7% of them applied cologne to the navel of nature, 30.7% of them applied olive oil [15]. The research conducted is similar to our study, it has been observed that women use traditional practices at high rates. According to the basic newborn care guide of the Ministry of Health; It is recommended to initiate breastfeeding within the first 30-60 minutes after birth

and to give colostrum to the newborn [23]. According to the WHO guidelines for maternal and newborn care recommendations for a positive postpartum experience; For neonatal jaundice, which affects approximately 60-80% of newborns, it has been recommended to check the total serum bilirubin level before discharge from the health institution [24].

In our study, 56.4% of the women (110 women) swaddled the newborn; When asked why; 53.8% (59 women) have straight legs, 31.8% (35 women) have hard as steel, 48.7% (54 women) keep their body temperature warm, 53.4% (59 women) sleep comfortably, 25.6% (28 women) keep their waist down They stated that they were arson. In the research conducted by Arabacı *et al.* in a family health center to determine the traditional methods applied to babies; 48% of women (47 women) swaddle the newborn; They reported the reasons for swaddling their babies as having straight legs (22 women), not getting a cold (11 women), sleeping well (9 women), not hitting their hands on their face (2 women), and "I learned that

Table 3. Comparison of education status and some traditional applications

Traditional Applications	Education Status			
	Primary school n (%)	Secondary school n (%)	High school n (%)	University n (%)
Using a yellow dressing to pass jaundice				
Yes	44 (52.4)	22 (26.2)	15 (17.9)	3 (3.6)
No	31 (27.9)	31 (27.9)	37 (33.3)	12 (10.8)
X ² / p value*	15.039/0.002			
Arson so that the waist does not sink				
Yes	28 (56.0)	11 (22.0)	9 (18.0)	2 (4.0)
No	47 (32.4)	42 (29.0)	43 (29.7)	13 (9.0)
X ² / p value*	9.127/0.003			
Arson so that it stays warm				
Yes	46 (48.4)	24 (25.3)	17 (17.9)	8 (8.4)
No	29 (29.0)	29 (29.0)	35 (35.0)	7 (7.0)
X ² / p value*	10.501/0.014			
Arson so that it is hard as steel				
Yes	33 (53.2)	19 (30.6)	8 (12.9)	2 (3.2)
No	42 (31.6)	34 (25.6)	44 (33.1)	13 (9.8)
X ² / p value*	14.369/0.002			
Arson so that the legs are smooth				
Yes	49 (46.7)	33 (31.4)	20 (19.0)	3 (2.9)
No	26 (28.9)	20 (22.2)	32 (35.6)	12 (13.3)
X ² / p value*	17.360/0.001			
Salt				
Yes	43 (49.4)	22 (25.3)	17 (19.5)	5 (5.7)
No	32 (29.6)	31 (28.7)	35 (32.4)	10 (9.3)
X ² / p value*	8.881/0.031			

*Chi-square test, p < 0.05

way" (2 women) [21]. The rates of the research conducted with our research are similar in this aspect.

In this study, 50.3% of those who apply olive oil to remove diaper rash; powder application was determined as 49.7%. In the research of Arabacı *et al.* [21], those who apply olive oil to remove diaper rash were 5.1%; those who use powder are 1%, those who use diaper rash cream are 74.5%; In the study of Arısoy *et al.* [25], those who apply powder to protect against diaper rash are 40.3%, those who apply olive oil 19.4%, those who apply powder when they have rashes, 10.1%, those who use olive oil, and 68% of those who

use the diaper cream given by the doctor.

Pathak *et al.* [26] in their research, 49.5% of women applied anything on the cord after delivery; Of these, 85.8% applied oil, 14.2% powder, 52.5% applied a liner/pencil to the eyes of the newborn after birth, 8% did not give colostrum to the newborn, 16% gave honey except for breast milk, 4% she reported that gave water. In a systematic review of quantitative and qualitative data compiled by Bee *et al.* to related newborn care practices in sub-Saharan Africa (Ethiopia, Ghana, Malawi, Tanzania and Uganda) were evaluated; It has been determined that agents are

applied to the cord, most commonly to prevent infections or to aid wound healing. This has been reported to occur due to lack of knowledge about breastfeeding and not giving colostrum with the belief that it is unclean or harmful [27].

According to the WHO guidelines It has been recommended to keep the umbilical cord clean and dry for the prevention of neonatal infection, and not to routinely apply creams, ointments, lotions, oils, gels, sprays and emulsions specified as topical emollients to the skin of term and healthy newborns [24]. The health benefit of newborns, where traditional practices are frequently applied in many countries and societies, should be considered. For this purpose, according to the WHO guideline for maternal and newborn care recommendations for a positive postpartum experience; it was stated that providing information, educational interventions and counseling are necessary to prepare women and parents for postpartum discharge from the health facility in order to improve maternal and newborn health outcomes and facilitate home care. It is suggested that there should be written/digital educational booklets and illustrated educational materials for the semi-literate population.

The necessity of ensuring continuity of care under the leadership of the midwife was emphasized. The application of midwife-led continuity of care models, in which a midwife or a group of midwives support the woman throughout the prenatal, intrapartum and postpartum period, is recommended for women. It has also been proposed to share tasks with a wide range of staff, including nurses, midwives and doctors, to promote health-related good behavior towards maternal and newborn health. Again, for all mothers and newborns, on day 3 (48-72 hours), 7-14 days after birth. recommended at least three additional postpartum visits on days and six weeks postpartum. These visits are important opportunities for observing traditional practices [24].

CONCLUSION

As a result; in our study, it is seen that traditional practices are widely applied in the neonatal period. Societies that ignore traditional practices should be effectively use health care services. For this reason, midwives and nurses have important duties. Informing

the society about traditional practices that have drawbacks should be among their main duties.

Authors' Contribution

Study Conception: AB, MS, MO, AG; Study Design: AB, MS; Supervision: AB; Funding: N/A; Materials: AB, MO, AG; Data Collection and/or Processing: AB, MS, MO; Statistical Analysis and/or Data Interpretation: AB, MS; Literature Review: AB, MS, MO, AG; Manuscript Preparation: AB, MS, MO, AG and Critical Review: AB, MS.

Conflict of interest

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