

N432 Maternal and Newborn Care Cultural Report

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India is one of the world's most religiously and ethnically diverse nations. The Indian culture is composed of unique traditions and customs still used today. East Central Illinois makes up around 20,000 Indians (U.S. Census Bureau, 2020).

Indians place a high value on harmony and unity with others. The majority of Indians believe in Hinduism. Most importantly, Hindus believe in the existence of more than one god. Samsara and karma are some core beliefs that still exist today (Rangiwai, 2020). Samsara refers to the idea of a continuous cycle of life and reincarnation. Karma is the most used term known as the spiritual cause and effect (Rangiwai, 2020). The Indian culture believes heavily in ayurvedic medications, and they believe that the Western culture relies heavily on antibiotics. Hindus believe that their health conditions may be related to their karma. Knowing Indians are reluctant to trust a female doctor, they will most likely go to a male doctor to get treated since they are considered more knowledgeable.

Indians accept pain and suffering on the idea that it is karma. The hospital can make implications by accepting the patient wishes and not using any form of pharmacological pain management. Concerning the post-partum period, a cradle ceremony is performed to identify the child's independence from his or her mother. Furthermore, "Ghee" or purified butter is used to improve the quality of breast milk. During the labor process, the mother is given sugary tea or porridge to help ease the delivery process. The squatted or seated position was the most favored during childbirth (Saxena et al., 2020).

It is common to find households comprised of joint families where 3 to 4 living generations live in the same house. The role of elders is to provide guidance and knowledge to the younger generations. They live with family and are usually treated with respect and dignity by family and community members.

In Indian culture, men are usually considered the head of the house. Women are expected to take care of the household, while men provide financial support. Women are expected to wear conservative clothing outside of the house. Men usually speak on behalf of their wives when communicating with strangers (Srivastava, 2019). Non-verbal communication norms include respecting each other's personal space. Physical touch, like hugging and holding hands, is not considered the norm. Verbal communication norms consist of being polite by greeting or saying "namaste" before starting and ending every conversation. Implementing these core values in healthcare can be done by including family in the childbearing process in a polite manner. Maintaining eye contact is essential in the healthcare setting, and this can enhance the patient-client relationship.

Food is seen as more than survival; it helps discover attitudes, practices, and rituals regarding food. The average Indian diet consists of foods high in carbohydrates and saturated fat. Foods like ghee, dry nuts, sesame seeds, and carom seeds help to increase breast milk supply after birth. Dry nuts help to strengthen the reproductive organs post-delivery (Behere et al., 2021). Many Hindus are used to consuming a vegetarian diet at home. They may not get the essential nutrients they need knowing hospitals in the United States do not serve Indian food.

When treating patients of the Indian culture, it is essential to ask permission before touching or getting too close to the patient. Also, providing as much modesty as possible when doing a physical assessment is essential. It would be ideal to prioritize the sitting or squatting position during the labor process since it is the preferred position. Providing specific foods like ghee and nuts will help to increase breast milk supply and strengthen reproductive organs. Lastly, it would be beneficial to note the foods they prefer to eat since their diet is primarily vegetarian.

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