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## Mexican Culture

Latino culture or Hispanic culture is an extensive topic. It includes actually many different cultures of Spanish-speaking and Portuguese-speaking populations in South America. Mexican culture is just a part of that big culture. According to US Census Bureau 2020, Illinois has 18.2% Hispanic residents. Indeed, a significant part of that is the Mexican population. Regarding religion, the Mexican population is 80% Roman Catholic. A minor part of the population is Protestants, Evangelicals, and other non-Cristian religions like Buddhists, Muslims, and Jewish people. Catholicism in Mexico has unique culture and history involving indigenous influences mixed with colonial ideas of religion. One example is the Virgin of Guadalupe, the patron saint of Mexico or Tonantzin. This dark skin lady is Mexican Mary, the mother of Jesus. Religion is vital in Mexican people, especially when they are challenged with health issues like childbirth, illness, and death. They rely on their faith and prayers and expect to get help from God (Hood, 2022).

The usual family structure in Mexicans is traditional. Mother and father and children make a family. Families may be large and extended by grandparents and cousins. Younger family members live together with older family members, and they take care of each other. Older people in the family are respected. They advise younger generations with wisdom and calm. They are mentors and advisers based on a lifetime experience. Older people are strong, and families rely on them when having problems. They do housework, comfort, listen to problems, help pay bills, sharing a home. Older people are the source of inspiration for younger family members (Hood, 2022).

Female members of the Mexican culture are allowed to speak to strangers. There are verbal and nonverbal customs in Mexican culture. Nonverbal communication is essential, even more than words. Nonverbal communication includes gestures, body language, space, eye contact, and tone of voice. Men are shaking hands. If two people know each other well, they can hug and touch each other on the back. Women can kiss each other on the cheek when greeting or saying goodbye. People like to show friendliness by touching. They can stand close when talking even closer than in American culture.

In Mexican culture, pain is less reported than in American culture. They take pain like something that has to be accepted and coped with. Some believe that the health problem is put on them by God to punish them for doing something wrong. They do not like to take pain medication. Some will instead seek help from folk healers and not Western medicine.

Postpartum women are primarily nursing their babies. They may ask for a placenta to take it home. They believe that the placenta has to be buried to prevent it from being eaten by animals. That way, a mother will not have pain. After having the baby, women enter the period of "cuarentena." This lasts 40 days, like quarantine, when the body is "open" and needs to "close." This belief comes from Bible. At that time woman stays at home to bond with the baby and recuperate from giving birth (Gonzales, 2022). A new mother focuses on breastfeeding while other women in the family or friends will help her with domestic work. Women in this period avoid sex and cold showers. They take herbal teas and hot chicken soup. Some women bind the abdomen with postpartum faja (Ricci et al., 2019).

## References

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