

Postpartum Care Practices of Nurses and Midwives: A Study from Islamic Malahayati Hospital Medan



Nur Asiah¹, Diah Arruum², Dewi Elizadiani Suza³

Abstract

Background: The postpartum period, lasting approximately six weeks after childbirth, is a critical phase for maternal and neonatal health. Effective care during this time requires skilled health workers to address physical, emotional, and social needs while promoting maternal autonomy and recovery. This study investigated the practices of nurses and midwives in delivering postpartum care at Islamic Malahayati Hospital Medan. **Methods:** A descriptive research design was used, involving 61 nurses and midwives selected through total sampling. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire focusing on postpartum care practices, responsibilities, and standards adherence. Quantitative analysis of the data was conducted, with results presented as frequency distributions and percentages. **Results:** The majority of participants were aged 26–35 years, with less than five years of work experience, and held a Diploma Degree. Of the respondents, 82% actively provided postpartum care, reflecting strong professional commitment and competency. These health workers demonstrated responsibility in fulfilling their roles, ensuring quality care for postpartum mothers and their newborns. **Conclusion:** Health workers at Islamic Malahayati Hospital Medan showed commendable

engagement in postpartum care, translating academic training into practical application. Future research should focus on improving systemic support and exploring additional factors influencing sustained high-quality postpartum care to enhance maternal and neonatal outcomes.

Keywords: Postpartum care, Maternal health, Nursing, Midwifery, Healthcare services

Introduction

The postpartum period, also known as the puerperium, refers to the timeframe following childbirth when a mother's body transitions to its pre-pregnancy state. It begins immediately after the delivery of the placenta and typically lasts for approximately six weeks or 40 days (Winkjosastro, 2011). This critical period necessitates comprehensive care to ensure the physical and emotional well-being of the mother, as well as the optimal health of the newborn. Health workers, particularly nurses and midwives, play a pivotal role in guiding postpartum women and their families toward achieving autonomy in managing their care and ensuring smooth recovery.

Effective postpartum care hinges on collaboration between health workers and patients, emphasizing education, motivation, and emotional support. The provision of care should address the mother's physical, psychological, and social needs to promote independence and enhance her ability to adapt to postpartum challenges. Emotional support is particularly crucial, as the risk of psychological disturbances, such as postpartum depression, can be elevated during this phase. Health workers must employ a patient-centered approach by assessing needs, developing action plans, and implementing targeted interventions. These efforts accelerate

Significance | This study highlights nurses' and midwives' critical role in postpartum care, emphasizing their responsibility in achieving maternal and neonatal health.

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recovery and strengthen the mother's ability to navigate this transformative period.

Orem's self-care theory underpins the importance of equipping individuals with the capacity to meet their own needs, thereby improving health outcomes. When mothers face barriers to self-care during the postpartum period, health workers step in to provide the necessary support, ensuring that their health is safeguarded. By offering guidance and practical information, health workers empower mothers to effectively care for themselves and their newborns, thus mitigating the risk of complications.

Despite advancements in maternal health, the postpartum period remains a vulnerable time for many mothers. Comprehensive postpartum care is critical in preventing complications such as infections, postpartum hemorrhage, or psychological disorders. It also encompasses newborn care, including breastfeeding support and early developmental monitoring. Health workers in hospitals often serve as the first point of contact for postpartum mothers, making their role indispensable. They must possess the expertise and empathy to provide holistic care that encompasses the biosocial and psychological dimensions of maternal and newborn health.

The independence of postpartum mothers in managing their care and newborn responsibilities is a cornerstone of effective postpartum recovery. Health workers must not only administer medical care but also foster an environment conducive to learning and adaptation. This holistic care approach, as outlined by the Association of Women's Health, Obstetric and Neonatal Nurses (AWHON, 2001), underscores the need for individualized support tailored to the unique needs of each mother and child.

Given the crucial nature of postpartum care, further examination of health workers' roles, practices, and challenges in delivering this care is warranted. Such insights can inform strategies to enhance the quality of services provided to postpartum women, ultimately promoting maternal and neonatal health and well-being. This study investigates the practices of nurses and midwives in postpartum care at Islamic Malahayati Hospital Medan, shedding light on their responsibilities and the impact of their interventions.

2. Methodology

This study employed a descriptive research design to evaluate the treatment provided by health workers to postpartum mothers at Malahayati Islamic Hospital, Medan. The hospital was selected based on its reputation for offering comprehensive postpartum care services, making it a suitable setting for this investigation. The study population comprised all nurses and midwives actively engaged in providing postpartum care at the hospital during the study period, amounting to a total of 61 participants. A total sampling technique was used, ensuring that every eligible health worker was included in the study.

Data collection was carried out over two months, from May to June 2018, following ethical clearance and approval from the hospital's ethics committee. A structured research questionnaire served as the primary data collection tool. The questionnaire included items designed to capture the actions and practices of nurses and midwives related to postpartum care, focusing on their responsibilities, adherence to professional standards, and the effectiveness of their interventions.

The questionnaire was distributed to participants in a secure and confidential manner. Participants were briefed on the study's purpose and assured of the anonymity of their responses. The collected data were compiled and analyzed quantitatively using descriptive statistics. Results were presented in the form of frequency distribution tables and percentages, enabling a clear understanding of the patterns and trends in postpartum care practices among the health workers.

This methodology facilitated a comprehensive assessment of the quality and consistency of postpartum care delivered by the hospital's nurses and midwives, contributing valuable insights into their professional responsibilities and the factors influencing their performance. The findings offer a foundation for developing strategies to enhance the delivery of postpartum care services and ensure optimal outcomes for mothers and newborns.

3. Results

The study revealed that the majority of midwives providing postpartum care at Islamic Malahayati Hospital Medan were aged between 26 and 35 years and had less than five years of work experience. Most participants held a Diploma Degree as their highest level of education (Table 1).

According to the questionnaire findings, 82% of nurses and midwives actively provided postpartum care services to mothers. This indicates a strong commitment to their professional responsibilities and an ability to implement their training effectively. The data highlights that these health workers are fulfilling their roles in postpartum nursing care, demonstrating competency and responsibility in ensuring the health and well-being of postpartum mothers and their newborns (Table 2).

4. Discussion

The findings underscore the dedication of health workers at Islamic Malahayati Hospital Medan in supporting postpartum mothers during a critical period. Health workers, as trusted caregivers, play a crucial role in delivering appropriate medical care and education to postpartum mothers. The high level of engagement (82%) observed in this study reflects the capacity of nurses and midwives to address the multifaceted needs of postpartum care.

According to Notoatmodjo (2012), effective healthcare actions encompass multiple dimensions, including perception, guided

Table 1. The frequency distribution of nurses and midwives' characteristics (*n* = 61)

Characteristics	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Age (Year)		
17 – 25	20	32.8
26 – 35	39	63.9
36 – 45	2	3.3
Length of work (Year)		
< 5	53	86.9
> 5	8	13.1
Last Education		
Diploma of Nursing	38	62.3
Diploma of Midwife	10	16.4
Diploma of Midwife	3	4.9
Ners	8	14.8
Master's degree of Nursing	1	1.6

Table 2. The Frequency distribution of health-workers treatment on postpartum (*n*=61)

Treatment-Applied	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Yes (Treatment Applied)	50	82
No (Treatment didn't Applied)	11	18
Total	61	100

response, mechanism, and adaptation. Perception involves recognizing and selecting appropriate actions based on patient needs. Guided responses ensure tasks are performed in a structured manner, while mechanisms reflect the health worker's ability to perform tasks autonomously. Adaptation, the highest level, involves modifying actions to align with the unique needs of the patient without compromising the effectiveness of the intervention.

This framework highlights the importance of knowledge and skill application among health workers. In this study, nurses and midwives demonstrated the ability to progress through these stages, applying their academic training to real-world situations. Their actions, influenced by direct patient interactions and supported by adequate facilities, contributed significantly to the quality of care provided.

The reliance on both observation and recall methods for data collection allowed for a comprehensive evaluation of health worker practices. Observational methods captured real-time actions, while recall-based questionnaires provided insights into the health workers' perspectives and approaches. This dual approach ensured a well-rounded understanding of the quality and consistency of care.

However, achieving optimal postpartum care requires more than individual competence. Supporting factors such as infrastructure, access to resources, and interdisciplinary collaboration are vital in enabling health workers to perform their duties effectively. The study findings suggest that the knowledge and experience gained through academic and professional training were effectively translated into practice, particularly among those with direct patient contact.

5. Conclusion

In conclusion, the results reaffirm the critical role of health workers in postpartum care. The majority of nurses and midwives demonstrated strong professional competence, supported by their educational background and practical experience. Future studies should explore ways to enhance systemic support and further investigate factors that contribute to sustained high-quality postpartum care. This would ensure that mothers and their newborns receive comprehensive and continuous support during the postpartum period.

Author contributions

N.A. conceptualized and designed the study. D.A. contributed to data collection and analysis. D.E.S. provided critical revisions and contributed to the final manuscript. All authors reviewed and approved the final version of the manuscript.

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Competing financial interests

The authors have no conflict of interest.

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