



## Coastal Community Belief Traditions Regarding Pregnant Women's Health in Hajoran Village, Central Tapanuli in 2023

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
<p><b>Article history:</b></p> <p>Received Sep 04, 2023 Revised Sep 14, 2023 Accepted Sep 30, 2023</p> <p><b>Keywords:</b></p> <p>Tradition; Trust; Pregnant mother; Coast.</p>	<p>Belief traditions are often rooted in the community's worldview, where they believe that certain practices can provide protection and good luck during pregnancy. Rituals, such as communal prayers, traditional ceremonies, or the use of herbal concoctions, are believed to maintain the health of the mother and fetus, and protect them from danger. This study aims to explore the beliefs of coastal communities related to maternal health in Hajoran Village, Central Tapanuli, in 2023. The method used was qualitative with interviews and observations of pregnant women, traditional birth attendants, and community leaders. The results showed that the community held rituals and ceremonies to protect pregnant women, used herbal concoctions, and implemented certain food taboos. These traditions have a significant influence on maternal health practices, although sometimes contrary to medical advice. Modern health services are starting to be accepted, but are often combined with traditional practices. This study concludes that the integration of local beliefs with modern health services is important for improving maternal and child health. Recommendations for further research are to explore the effectiveness of the combination of traditional and modern practices in the context of health.</p> <p><i>This is an open access article under the <a href="https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/">CC BY-NC</a> license.</i></p>



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### 1. Introduction

Maternal health is an important indicator in the public health system, directly influencing maternal safety and child development. (Mutiarra et al., 2023), (Setiawan & Nurcahyanto, 2020). In Indonesia, including in coastal areas such as Hajoran Village, Central Tapanuli, local traditions and beliefs play a significant role in health practices carried out by pregnant women. Coastal communities often have unique approaches to maintaining health, involving rituals, herbal concoctions, and food taboos that are passed down from generation to generation. (Alwi, 2019), (Rumbi, 2020).

These belief traditions are often rooted in the worldview of the community, where they believe that certain practices can provide protection and good luck during pregnancy. (Humaeni, 2021), (Pranata, 2021). These rituals, such as communal prayers, traditional ceremonies, or the use of herbal concoctions, are believed to maintain the health of the mother and fetus, and protect them from danger. (Humaeni, 2021), (Fauziyah, Nursida, Wardah, Shoheh, & Sujana, 2020).

However, with advances in health science and increasing access to modern medical services, challenges arise in integrating traditional practices with medical approaches.(Komalasari, 2022),(Romadhon, 2023). Some pregnant women may be hesitant to adopt modern health services, which may result in potential risks to their health and that of their babies.(Priyanti & Syalfina, 2017),(Setyani, 2019). In this context, it is important to conduct in-depth research to understand how these belief traditions influence maternal health behavior and how solutions based on the integration of traditional and medical practices can be developed.(Uberty, 2022),(Ningsih et al., 2023).

This study aims to provide a more comprehensive picture of the traditional beliefs of coastal communities in Hajoran Village, as well as their impact on the health of pregnant women. By understanding the interaction between local beliefs and modern health services, it is hoped that useful recommendations can be found to improve maternal and child health, as well as create harmony between culture and medical practices in the community.(Fabanyo & Anggreini, 2022),(Wardani et al., 2023).

## **2. Methods**

### **2.1 Research design**

The type of research used is research and development, using a qualitative method approach. The product developed is the Collaborative Innovative Participatory Training Management Model (PILAR) in Improving Midwives' Competence on Stunting in Hajoran Village(Arsyam & Tahir, 2021),(Ali, 2022).

### **2.2 Population and Sample**

The population in this study was the community in Hajoran Village, Central Tapanuli, with a focus on pregnant women, traditional birth attendants, and community leaders. The sample was taken using a purposive sampling method, consisting of 30 pregnant women, 5 traditional birth attendants, and 5 community leaders, selected based on certain criteria. Pregnant women who participated were those who were in their 1-9th month of pregnancy, while traditional birth attendants must have at least 3 years of experience in practice. The community leaders involved were those who had knowledge of local health traditions. With careful sample selection, this study aims to produce representative and accurate data on traditional health practices and beliefs of coastal communities related to the health of pregnant women.(Sukiman, 2020),(Wijanarti, 2021).

### **2.3 Method of collecting data**

Data collection in this study was carried out through several methods, namely interviews, observations, and documentation studies.

### **2.4 Data Analysis Techniques**

The data analysis technique in this study used a qualitative approach that included several steps. First, the interview data was transcribed verbatim to ensure the accuracy of the information. Next, the coding process was carried out by labeling the relevant data sections, which were then grouped into categories based on emerging themes. Thematic analysis was conducted to identify patterns and relationships between traditional practices and maternal health. The results of the analysis were then interpreted by linking the findings to existing literature, as well as the cultural context of coastal communities. The data validation process was also carried out through triangulation, by comparing the results of interviews, observations, and documentation studies. With these steps, it is hoped that the study can provide a deeper understanding of the influence of traditional beliefs on the health of pregnant women.

## **3. Results and Discussion**

The results of this study provide an in-depth picture of the influence of traditional beliefs of coastal communities in Hajoran Village on the health of pregnant women. Through interviews with 30 pregnant

women, 5 midwives, and 5 community leaders, it was found that the community relies heavily on herbal concoctions as a solution to various health problems during pregnancy. Concoctions such as ginger and soursop leaves are often used to relieve nausea and increase stamina in pregnant women. Midwives, who have a central role in the community, not only provide concoctions, but also emphasize the importance of avoiding certain foods, such as spicy or cold foods, which are considered to be detrimental to fetal health.

Rituals and thanksgiving ceremonies before childbirth are also an integral part of the tradition, where families and neighbors gather to provide support and prayers for pregnant women. This moment not only strengthens social ties, but also creates a sense of security and comfort for mothers who are going through the pregnancy process. Observations made show that, although coastal communities are starting to access modern health services, traditional practices are still highly valued and maintained. Many pregnant women undergo health checks at health centers, but they also feel the need to continue using herbal concoctions and following the advice of traditional midwives. This shows a combination of modern health services and traditional practices, which are expected to provide maximum benefits for the health of mothers and children.

In addition, the documentation analysis revealed that although the local government has tried to raise community awareness about the importance of prenatal care, the challenge in changing the established mindset is significant. Many people still trust traditional birth attendants more than medical personnel, due to relationships that have been established over the years and recognition of their experience. The documents obtained also noted that there were initiatives to involve traditional birth attendants in health programs, so that the information conveyed could be better accepted by the community. This study confirms that traditional beliefs are not only part of the community's identity, but also contribute to the overall health of pregnant women.

Thus, it is important to integrate traditional practices with modern health services to create a more holistic approach to improving maternal and child health. This approach that respects local wisdom is expected to not only improve access to and quality of health services, but also create a more supportive environment for future generations. By understanding and respecting existing traditions and beliefs, health interventions can be designed in a more relevant and effective way, ensuring that communities feel valued and involved in their own health care processes.

### 3.2 Discussion

The discussion of this study focuses on the interpretation of the results obtained regarding the health of pregnant women in Hajoran Village, as well as the role of coastal community belief traditions in this context. The results of the study show that although the community has access to modern health services, they still maintain and rely on traditional practices that have existed for years. This shows that belief traditions not only function as a method of treatment, but also as an integral part of the identity and culture of the community. (Wake Up, 2018), (Humaedi, 2016).

One of the main findings in this study is the use of herbal concoctions by pregnant women. This practice shows the importance of local knowledge that is passed down from generation to generation. Concoctions such as ginger and soursop leaves were chosen because they are considered to have natural properties to overcome various pregnancy symptoms, such as nausea and fatigue. Pregnant women interviewed stated that they felt more comfortable using these concoctions because of the beliefs that have been embedded in their culture. The presence of herbal concoctions in the daily lives of pregnant women reflects the community's recognition of natural benefits, despite more modern information about treatment. (Muslimin et al., 2022), (Sulaiman, 2022).

The role of traditional birth attendants in the community is also very significant. They are not only providers of health services, but also holders of cultural knowledge related to pregnancy and childbirth. In interviews, traditional birth attendants stated that they have a responsibility to maintain the health of pregnant women in a way that is in line with community values. They see themselves as a link between traditional knowledge and modern health practices, indicating the importance of collaboration between the two approaches. By involving traditional birth attendants in health programs, communities can

benefit from both time-tested practices and evidence-based health services.(Author Team, 2019),(Sucitra, 2024).

The thanksgiving ritual before giving birth is also an important aspect found in this study. This ceremony is held with the aim of providing emotional and spiritual support for pregnant women. This activity involves all family members and neighbors, thus creating a strong social bond. Pregnant women who feel supported by their community tend to have a more positive pregnancy experience and reduce feelings of anxiety or stress. This suggests that social support is an important factor in the mental health of pregnant women, which is often overlooked in the context of health services.

However, despite the many benefits of traditional practices, challenges remain in integrating these traditions with modern health services. Although local governments have made efforts to increase community awareness of the importance of prenatal care, there is still skepticism towards medical personnel, especially among communities that place more trust in traditional birth attendants. This calls for a more sensitive approach to local values. Health programs should be designed with community leaders and traditional birth attendants as part of the strategy, so that communities feel involved and valued in their health care process.

This study also underscores the importance of recognizing traditional beliefs in health interventions. Success in improving maternal and child health depends not only on access to modern health services, but also on the integration of existing traditional practices. An approach that values local wisdom can create a health system that is more inclusive and responsive to community needs. By understanding and appreciating traditional beliefs, health interventions can be designed in a more relevant and effective way.

Overall, the results of this study provide valuable insights for the development of health programs in coastal areas. By combining traditional practices with modern health services, it is hoped that more holistic and sustainable solutions will be created. An approach that involves communities and respects their traditions will increase participation, trust, and effectiveness of health interventions. This will not only improve maternal health today, but also create a strong foundation for future generations, ensuring that the health and well-being of coastal communities can be maintained and improved.

#### 4. Conclusion

Traditional practices, such as the use of herbal remedies and traditional birth attendants, play a significant role in maintaining maternal health in Hajoran Village, reflecting deep beliefs in local culture. Prenatal thanksgiving rituals are important in providing social support and creating a sense of security for pregnant women, although there are challenges in integrating these practices with modern health services.

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