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Association Between Cultural Factors and Postpartum Depression

Usha Modukuru
Rowan University

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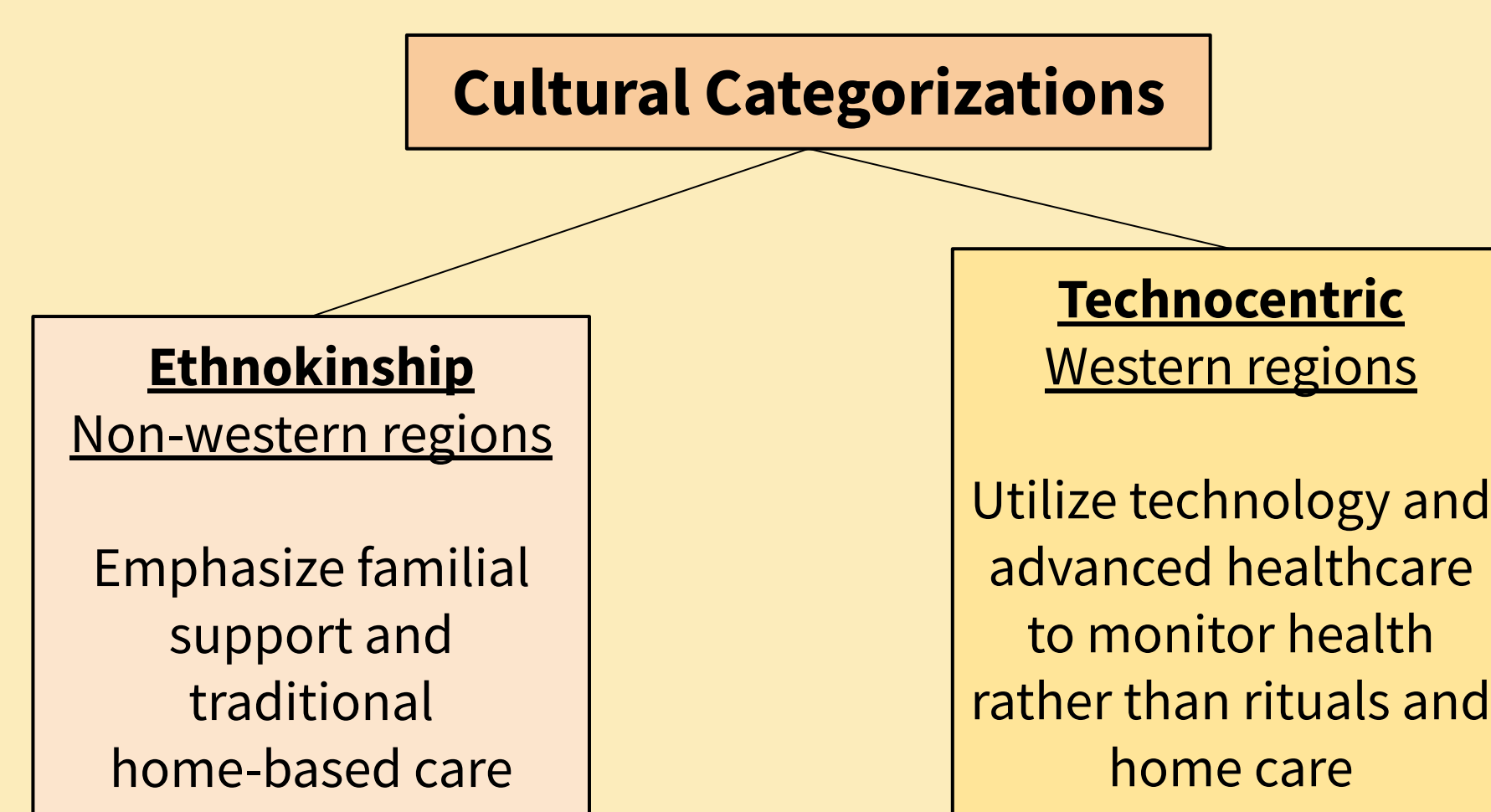
Association between cultural factors and postpartum depression

Author name(s): Usha Modukuru OMS-II
 Department: OBGYN

Introduction

- What is it:** Postpartum depression (PPD), defined as depressive episodes consisting of persistent sadness, poor sleep, low self esteem, physical health deterioration, and/or increased risk of suicide occurring after a pregnancy, is a condition that is prevalent throughout the world. 1 in 7 women, 17.22% of the world population in 2021, were found to be diagnosed with PPD.
- Importance:** The physical, psychological, and social consequences of PPD on mothers, children, and surrounding family and friends increase the importance of identifying risk factors of PPD.
- Risk factors:** Among the risk factors of social support, socioeconomic status, psychiatric history, and culture, cultural factors and their relation to PPD are yet to be thoroughly and comprehensively researched. PPD prevalence was shown to vary among various cultures - especially between Western and non-Western cultures.

- Cultural factors:**



- Aim:** This paper aims to examine PPD prevalence rates throughout the world and provide an up to date compilation of common cultural postpartum experiences specific to each region to identify whether cultural factors can influence the occurrence of PPD.

Methods

- Search terms:** “postpartum depression” AND “culture” OR “cross-cultural” OR “transcultural”; “postpartum depression” AND “North America” OR “South America” OR “Europe” OR “Asia” OR “Africa”; and “postpartum depression”
- Selection Criteria:** peer reviewed articles, primary surveys, and patient interviews published between 2013-2023; few foundational articles including systematic reviews and meta-analyses published between 2000-2013
- Data Extraction:** Rates of PPD by country, Common cultural postpartum practices, Relevant statistical values regarding the prevalence of PPD and relations between cultural practices
 - Data analysis performed via qualitative comparisons

Results

Region	PPD Prevalence Rate (%)
Southern Africa	39.96
Southern Asia	22.32
South America	21.71
Western Asia	19.83
Northern Africa	18.75
Eastern Asia	17.39
North America	17.01
Eastern Europe	16.62
Western Africa	13.62
Western Europe (Spain)	9.09

Legend:

- Ethnokinship (Light Blue)
- Technocentric (Light Yellow)

Figure 1. Postpartum depression prevalence rates with a 95% confidence interval in the countries discussed within this study. Data from Wang et al. 2021.

Region	Common Postpartum Practices and Their Impacts
Africa	
Asia	
South America	
North America	
Europe	

Figure 2. Postpartum practices observed in each region.

Conclusion

- Variety of postnatal practices exist, each with its own impact on mothers
- Correlation between cultural factors and the onset of postpartum depression does exist based on the prevalence rates and respective practices which led to either poor or improved maternal health outcomes.
- There is room for further studies to elaborate on the severity of the impact of specific cultural factors on PPD prevalence.
 - Future:** collect information regarding PPD prevalence in more regions
 - Future:** identify impact of common practices on maternal mental health

Limitations

- Limited information available on postpartum practices worldwide
- Lack of awareness of postpartum depression
 - Certain regions are not aware of this diagnosis, which can lead to a miscalculation of PPD prevalence rates (likely higher than stated)
- Confounding variables
 - Socioeconomic status
 - Varying tools used to diagnose PPD

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