









## Reproductive Health in the View of the Toba Batak Ethnicity

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### ABSTRACT

Reproductive health is a complete physical, mental and social well-being in all matters including the reproductive system and function, and the reproductive process and is not just a condition that is free from disease and disability. Everyone must be able to have a satisfying and safe sexual life for himself, also be able to reduce and fulfill his desires without any obstacles, when, and how often to have children. Inland communities who are still lacking in understanding reproductive health knowledge and lack of adequate facilities for health checks, enhance adolescents' understanding of the process of change that occurs in themselves, especially young women facing menarche, need to provide health information and also understanding from their closest people, family and friends. the social environment becomes a support system. The importance of receiving news about early menopause and how to deal with early menopause so that there is no excessive anxiety.

**Keyword:** *Reproductive health, health anthropology, woman, ethnic Batak Toba.*

### ABSTRAK

Kesehatan reproduksi adalah sejahtera fisik, mental, dan sosial yang utuh dalam segala hal termasuk sistem dan fungsi reproduksi, serta proses reproduksi dan bukan hanya sekedar keadaan bebas dari penyakit dan kecacatan. Setiap orang harus dapat memiliki kehidupan seksual yang memuaskan dan aman bagi dirinya sendiri, juga dapat mewujudkan dan memenuhi keinginannya tanpa hambatan, kapan, dan seberapa sering memiliki anak. Masyarakat pedalaman yang masih kurang memahami pengetahuan kesehatan reproduksi dan kurangnya fasilitas pemeriksaan kesehatan yang memadai, meningkatkan pemahaman remaja tentang proses perubahan yang terjadi pada dirinya, khususnya remaja putri yang menghadapi menarche, perlu diberikan informasi kesehatan dan juga pemahaman tentang dirinya. orang terdekat, keluarga dan teman. lingkungan sosial menjadi sistem pendukung. Pentingnya menerima berita tentang menopause dini dan cara menghadapi menopause dini agar tidak terjadi kecemasan yang berlebihan.

**Keyword:** *Kesehatan reproduksi, antropologi kesehatan, wanita, etnis Batak Toba*



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## 1. Introduction

The topic of reproductive health is crucial in the Toba Batak Ethnicity, especially in the context of Batakness, due to several factors. Firstly, there is a scarcity of previous research on this topic in the Toba Batak community, which has led to a lack of understanding of the specific reproductive health needs and challenges faced by this group. The research on the reproductive health of the Toba Batak community is still limited, and more studies are needed to explore the unique challenges and needs of this population. Therefore, it is crucial to conduct more research to gain a better understanding of the reproductive health issues in the Toba Batak

community. As stated by Mafina et al., (2009), reproductive health is also defined as a set of methods, techniques, and services that promote reproductive health and well-being by preventing and resolving reproductive health issues such as sexual health, life status, and personal relationships, as opposed to just providing consultation and treatment related to reproduction and diseases transmitted through sex.

Secondly, there is a need to understand the local understanding and cultural beliefs surrounding reproductive health in the Toba Batak community. This is important to ensure that reproductive health programs and services are culturally appropriate and acceptable to the community. Cultural beliefs and practices of the Toba Batak community may affect reproductive health-seeking behaviour, and it is necessary to understand these factors to develop effective interventions. Understanding cultural practices and beliefs is critical in designing reproductive health interventions that are culturally sensitive and acceptable.

Moreover, reproductive health issues are prevalent in the Toba Batak community, which further emphasizes the importance of this topic. Reproductive health problems such as maternal mortality, unintended pregnancies, and unsafe abortions are still prevalent in the Toba Batak community. Addressing these reproductive health issues is essential to improve the overall health outcomes of the Toba Batak population.

In conclusion, the topic of reproductive health is vital in the Toba Batak ethnicity, particularly in Batakness, due to the scarcity of previous research, the impact of cultural beliefs and practices, and the prevalence of reproductive health problems. It is crucial to conduct more research and develop culturally sensitive interventions to address these issues effectively.

Adolescence is the period between childhood and adulthood. This term refers to the period of time between the onset of puberty and the attainment of maturity, which generally begins at 14 years of age in boys and 12 years of age in girls. At the ages of 11–16 years for men and 10–15 years for women, adolescent growth and development is very rapid (Samadi, 2004). Adolescent women in puberty face a number of challenges, including the development of female behavior, physical changes, menstrual cycle conditions, acne, obesity, and disease (Samadi, 2004).

During puberty, an individual experiences physical, psychological, and social changes as they transition from childhood to adulthood. Puberty is a holistic transition between childhood and sexual maturity. Menstruation, which typically occurs in young girls between the ages of 9 and 16, is a sign of puberty. The first appearance of menstruation in females and wet dreams in males differs for each individual. Nutritional status is one of the many causes of this disparity. Usually, a girl gets her first period between the ages of 12 and 13, but in this case, it happens between the ages of 8 and 9, which is called "early menstruation." Menstruation is an important part of a woman's life cycle. It shows that a young woman has grown up, especially in her reproductive organs. This time period also shows the different ways a child's life changes over time. Change is not only limited to the physical, but also includes social, psychological, economic, and spiritual changes. Reproductive health is an important aspect of health that receives little attention. Because people believe that these cases are taboo to discuss and because of family socio-cultural constraints regarding gender aspects that can affect the way of thinking and behavior of women and men, adolescent reproductive issues are thought to be very sensitive and should be brought to the forefront.

## **2. Research Method**

A descriptive research method is used for material on reproductive health in the view of the Toba Batak ethnicity, where the descriptive research method itself is a research method that shows the characteristics of the population or phenomenon being studied. As a result, this research method focuses primarily on explaining the research object and answering the question of reproductive health from the perspective of the Toba Batak ethnicity.

## **3. Result and Discussion**

Article 71 of Health Law Number 36 of 2009 says that reproductive health is a state of complete physical, mental, and social health, not just the absence of disease or disability related to the reproductive system, functions, and processes in men and girls. The Government Regulation of the Republic of Indonesia Number 61 of 2014 on Reproductive Health has rules about reproductive health.

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), health is a condition that includes physical, mental, and social health and does not simply mean the absence of disease and disability. Meanwhile,

according to Health Law Number 36 of 2009, health is a physically, mentally, spiritually, and socially healthy state that allows everyone to live productively socially and economically.

Batak culture is a way of life that has been developed by the Batak people in their society. Patterns and types of relationships between Batak people are also governed by this culture. The Batak people's kinship system is patrilineal, meaning it is based on the father's lineage. This patrilineal kinship system is the backbone of Batak society, which is made up of descendants, clans, and ethnic groups all linked by line.

Traditions of the Toba Batak tribe are carried out through ceremonies that start with conception, birth, weaning, illness, disaster, and end with death. A special traditional ceremony marks the transition between each level of life. Traditional ceremonies are performed to avoid harm that will befall blessings, health, and safety. This is one of the guiding principles behind the execution of every traditional Toba Batak ceremony.

In everyday life, the Toba Batak tribe has its own culture. The culture that has been passed down from generation to generation determines all behaviors. In dealing with health issues, the Batak Toba tribe employs a variety of cultural practices, including newborn care (Swasono, 1998). The Toba Batak tribe's culture has unique traditions that have been passed down from generation to generation.

## Menstruation

During puberty, teenagers will go through a variety of experiences. Several physical and psychosexual changes will occur during this period, including feelings of attraction to the opposite sex and changes in appearance. The child's first menstruation usually comes with its own set of benefits and memories. Depending on their knowledge, each child will have different feelings. Menstruation occurs once a month. Menstruation is inextricably linked to its associated symptoms, one of which is dysmenorrhea, or abdominal pain during menstruation.

Menstruation is not a new phenomenon in human life, but not everyone is comfortable discussing it. This assumption can be seen in the participants' expressions and the findings of the observations, which show that menarche is a taboo subject in Batak society (Simanjuntak et al., 2013). This is evident from the following participant behaviors and expressions: Two of the six participants stated unequivocally that menarche is a taboo subject that should not be discussed. Menstruation is a very personal matter that should not be discussed in the Batak Toba community (Simanjuntak, 2008). This statement was reinforced by the teenagers' parents, who stated that menstruation did not need to be discussed and that it was preferable for teenagers to experience it naturally. Parents also believe that teenagers will figure it out on their own (Surmiasih & Priyati, 2018).

## Birth

In Toba Batak culture, caring for newborns begins with a baby-welcoming ceremony called manomunomu (picking up people with a ceremony, hailing them), followed by fixing the baby's navel cord with sharp bamboo scales on a bed of yam seeds the size of three fingers, depending on the baby (Pandangan, 2011). Then, for the afterbirth, planting will be carried out, which is generally planted on muddy soil (rice fields).

The shaman then breaks and chews the hazelnut before giving it to the baby in order to clean the dirt that the baby carries from the womb as well as the first food digestion, which is known as tilan (first feces).

## Postnatal Care

The patterned cultural value system incorporates all aspects of people's values. Community life is a pattern of group life in various forms. According to (Roma, 2010; Sitorus, 2011), regarding saline treatment for the Toba Batak ethnicity, specifically:

1. Performing daily housework such as cooking, laundry, and cleaning.
2. Putting charcoal under or beside the mother to keep her and her baby warm
3. The husband gave the mother water and black beer with the expectation that she would recover quickly and be strong enough to return to work in the fields once she was fully recovered because farming is their primary source of income.

4. Give the mother food, especially wake-awake and napinadar chickens, so that the remaining blood in her uterus drains quickly, she gets better quickly, and breastfeeding is easier.
5. Assist the mother in urinating, bathing, and changing clothes if she so desires.

## Menopause

Knowledge about menopause is essential for women going through menopause to understand what menopause is like, what symptoms and signs of menopause are, and how to manage complaints that occur during menopause. With this information, women who are getting close to menopause will be better prepared mentally to go through menopause and deal with any problems that may come up.

## 4. Conclusion

In everyday life, the Toba Batak tribe has its own culture. The culture that has been passed down from generation to generation determines all behaviors. In dealing with health issues, the Batak Toba tribe employs a variety of cultural practices, including newborn care. The Toba Batak tribe's culture has unique traditions that have been passed down from generation to generation.

Teenagers aren't ready for menstruation because they don't know enough about it, their parents don't help them, and their friends don't help them. Menarche is shocking, worrying, and frightening because of this lack of preparation. If adolescents have previously received information from their parents and social environment, this will not occur.

According to how people in the Toba Batak culture see things, postpartum care has its own ways of making sure the body stays healthy, getting rid of dirty blood, and expressing breast milk. (ASI). Menopause is a vulnerable stage in elderly women, so be prepared by learning about early menopause. Women who have not gone through menopause will be more physically and psychologically prepared and independent before entering the premenopausal phase with all of the changes that occur. Efforts are made by following a healthy diet, exercising regularly, and consuming traditional herbs.

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