

Continuity of Care Based on a Holistic Approach to Enhance Postpartum Maternal Adaptation

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ABSTRACT

The postpartum period is a transitional period characterized by physical, psychological, social, and spiritual changes that require a mother to adapt well. A holistic Continuity of Care (CoC) approach plays a role in supporting this adaptation process through the provision of continuous and comprehensive midwifery care. This study aims to describe the implementation of Continuity of Care based on a holistic approach in improving maternal adaptation after childbirth. The method used is a descriptive case study with the provision of continuous midwifery care starting from the third trimester of pregnancy, delivery, the fourth stage of pregnancy, postpartum care, newborn care, and family planning services through physical monitoring, psychological support, health education, breastfeeding assistance, family involvement, and fulfillment of the mother's spiritual needs. The results of the study indicate that mothers are able to adapt well during the postpartum period, characterized by normal physical recovery, successful breastfeeding, the absence of postpartum complications, increased confidence in caring for the baby, and optimal family support. It is concluded that the implementation of Continuity of Care based on a holistic approach can support the physical, psychological, social, and spiritual adaptation of mothers after childbirth, thereby contributing to improving the quality of maternal and infant health.

Keywords : *Continuity of Care*, holistic midwifery care, postpartum maternal adaptation, puerperium, maternal health

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INTRODUCTION

The postpartum period is a critical period that begins immediately after birth and continues for 42 days postpartum. This period is crucial for maternal health recovery and adjustment to the new role of mother. The World Health Organization states that the postpartum period is a vulnerable period because the majority of maternal and infant deaths and morbidity occur in the first few days after delivery. Mothers and infants in many countries still do not receive adequate postpartum care during this period. This situation indicates that the quality of postpartum care remains a challenge in efforts to improve maternal and neonatal health. The importance of comprehensive and continuous care during the postpartum period has also been reported in various studies, which show that the postpartum period is a crucial phase for maternal and infant health, both in the short and long term. Integrated, woman-centered, and continuous care has been shown to improve the quality of mothers' experiences and support better maternal and neonatal health outcomes (1) (2) (3).

Postpartum mothers face not only physical health issues but also various psychological and social challenges that can impact the maternal adaptation process. Postpartum depression is one of the most common complications experienced by mothers after childbirth. A meta-analysis of 412 studies from 46 countries showed that postpartum depression remains a global health problem, impacting maternal well-being and child growth and development. Long-term postpartum health problems, such as anxiety and depression, are also common among women after childbirth. Various studies have shown that stress, lack of social support, difficulty adapting to role changes, and limited psychosocial resources are contributing factors to postpartum psychological disorders (4) (1) (5) (6).

The successful physical adaptation found in this case study is inseparable from the implementation of Continuity of Care, a holistic approach that allows mothers to receive continuous health monitoring throughout pregnancy, delivery, the fourth stage of labor, and the postpartum period. The ongoing relationship between midwives and mothers allows for early identification of health problems and the provision of appropriate interventions tailored to the mother's needs. Continuity of care provides healthcare workers with the opportunity to monitor the mother's overall condition, support successful breastfeeding, and enhance the mother's experience during the postpartum period. These findings align with numerous studies showing that the Continuity of Care model contributes to improved maternal care quality, maternal satisfaction, breastfeeding success, and improved health outcomes through comprehensive, woman-centered care (2) (7).

Postpartum maternal adaptation is a process involving physical, psychological, social, and maternal role adjustments after the birth of a baby. This adaptation process is influenced by the mother's health condition, childbirth experience, family support, support from health workers, and the surrounding social environment. Mothers who receive ongoing support and adequate guidance tend to be better able to cope with changes that occur during the postpartum period, have lower levels of anxiety, and demonstrate greater self-confidence in carrying out their role as mothers. Various studies have shown that optimal social and emotional support plays a crucial role in improving maternal adaptation, strengthening the mother-infant bond, and reducing the risk of postpartum depression and stress (8) (9) (10) (5) (6) (11) (12).

One service model that can support successful maternal adaptation is Continuity of Care (CoC). This model emphasizes the provision of continuous midwifery care from pregnancy, childbirth, postpartum, newborn care, and family planning services. A continuous relationship between midwives and mothers allows for more effective communication, early identification of problems, and consistent support throughout the transition to parenthood. A systematic review showed that a midwife-led continuity of care model can increase maternal satisfaction, reduce unnecessary interventions, and provide better maternal outcomes than discontinuous care. Recent research also shows that the implementation of Continuity of Care contributes to

improved midwifery care quality, more positive childbirth experiences, and the continuity of support mothers need during the postpartum period through woman- and family-centered care (2) (13) (7) (14).

Modern midwifery services are not only oriented towards meeting physical needs but also integrate a holistic approach encompassing psychological, social, cultural, and spiritual aspects. A holistic approach views the mother as a whole individual, therefore, the services provided must be able to meet all of these needs in a balanced manner. Emotional support, health education, breastfeeding support, family involvement, and respect for the mother's values and beliefs are essential components of holistic care that can improve maternal well-being during the postpartum period. This approach also supports the creation of woman-centered care, respects individual preferences, and improves the quality of the mother's experience during the transition to parenthood (15) (16).

Modern midwifery services are not only oriented towards meeting physical needs but also integrate a holistic approach encompassing psychological, social, cultural, and spiritual aspects. A holistic approach views the mother as a whole individual, therefore, the services provided must be able to meet all of these needs in a balanced manner. Emotional support, health education, breastfeeding support, family involvement, and respect for the mother's values and beliefs are essential components of holistic care that can improve maternal well-being during the postpartum period. This approach also supports the creation of woman-centered care, respects individual preferences, and improves the quality of the mother's experience during the transition to parenthood (15); (16) (14) (17).

Various studies have separately discussed the benefits of Continuity of Care and a holistic approach. However, studies integrating these two approaches to improve maternal adaptation after childbirth are still relatively limited. This is despite the fact that maternal needs during the postpartum period relate not only to physical recovery but also to psychological, social, and spiritual readiness to fulfill their role as mothers. Therefore, research on Continuity of Care based on a holistic approach is necessary to gain insight into its contribution to improving maternal adaptation after childbirth and supporting the development of woman-centered midwifery services. The results of this study are expected to form the basis for developing a more comprehensive, sustainable midwifery service model that is tailored to the needs of postpartum mothers (13) (1) (16) (18).

METHODS

This study used a descriptive method with a case study approach to illustrate the implementation of Continuity of Care based on a holistic approach in improving maternal adaptation after childbirth. The study subject was one pregnant woman in her third trimester selected based on inclusion criteria and followed continuously from pregnancy, delivery, the fourth stage, postpartum, newborn care, to family planning services. Data collection was conducted through interviews, observations, physical examinations, and documentation studies using the midwifery care format and SOAP recording. The holistic approach was applied by considering the physical, psychological, social, and spiritual aspects of the mother through health education, emotional support, breastfeeding assistance, and family involvement in the care process. Data were analyzed descriptively by comparing the results of care to midwifery service standards to describe the process and results of maternal adaptation during the postpartum period.

RESULTS

The results of this case study illustrate the development of postpartum maternal adaptation after receiving Continuity of Care based on a holistic approach. Care was provided continuously, starting from pregnancy, delivery, the fourth stage of labor, the postpartum period, newborn

care, and family planning services. Evaluation of the results showed that the mother was able to adapt well to the changes that occurred during the postpartum period. This successful adaptation was reflected in the physical, psychological, social, and spiritual aspects that developed positively throughout the care process.

1. Physical adaptation

The assessment results showed that the labor process proceeded physiologically without complications. Monitoring of the fourth stage of labor showed the mother's general condition was good, vital signs were within normal limits, uterine contractions were good, and there was no bleeding or postpartum danger signs. During the postpartum period, the mother's physical adaptation was optimal, indicated by uterine involution appropriate for the postpartum age, normal lochia discharge, no signs of infection, and good wound healing. Breast milk production increased in the early days after delivery, and breastfeeding was effective. The mother was also able to meet her nutritional, rest, and self-care needs as recommended during postpartum visits.

2. Psychological adaptation

Maternal psychological adaptation showed positive developments during the postpartum period. Early in the postpartum period, mothers expressed concerns about their ability to care for their babies and fulfill their role as mothers. Continuous education, counseling, emotional support, and mentoring helped improve mothers' understanding and confidence. At subsequent postpartum visits, mothers demonstrated improved abilities in caring for their babies, understanding their babies' needs, and feeling more prepared and confident in fulfilling their maternal roles.

3. Social Adaptation

The mother's social adaptation progresses well through the active involvement of her husband and family during the postpartum period. The husband and family help meet the mother's daily needs, support the baby's care, provide emotional support, and accompany the mother during the recovery process. This social support creates a sense of security and comfort, helping the mother transition into her new role as a parent. Family involvement also contributes to the mother's successful postpartum adaptation process.

4. Spiritual Adaptation

Maternal spiritual adaptation demonstrated positive results during the postpartum period. Mothers were able to perform religious activities appropriate to their health and displayed a positive attitude toward the birth experience. Mothers also expressed gratitude for the health of themselves and their babies. The spiritual support provided during the care process helped mothers achieve inner peace, improved their ability to cope with postpartum changes, and strengthened their readiness to fulfill their role as mothers.

DISCUSSION

This research discusses the results of implementing Continuity of Care based on a holistic approach to maternal adaptation after childbirth. Analysis was conducted on physical, psychological, social, and spiritual aspects as indicators of successful maternal adaptation during the postpartum period. The findings are compared with previous theory and research to explain the role of continuous midwifery care in supporting the recovery process, increasing self-confidence, family involvement, and overall maternal well-being.

1. Physical Adaptation

The case study results indicate that the mother's physical adaptation after delivery was optimal. This condition was characterized by a physiological delivery process without

complications, good general maternal condition during the fourth stage, vital signs within normal limits, adequate uterine contractions, and the absence of bleeding or other postpartum danger signs. These findings indicate that the early postpartum recovery process is proceeding according to expected physiological changes. Continuous monitoring during the fourth stage is crucial because most maternal complications, particularly postpartum hemorrhage, generally occur within the first 24 hours after delivery. Therefore, optimal monitoring during this period is a crucial effort to prevent maternal morbidity and mortality (1).

The development of the mother's physical condition during the postpartum period shows uterine involution occurring according to the postpartum age, lochia discharge within normal limits, no signs of infection, and proper wound healing. These conditions indicate that the reproductive organs are recovering physiologically. Uterine involution is an important indicator in assessing the success of postpartum recovery because it reflects the return of the reproductive organs to their pre-pregnancy state. Regular monitoring of uterine involution and lochia discharge allows early detection of possible subinvolution, puerperal infection, or other complications during the postpartum period.

The success of a mother's physical adaptation is also evident in the increased milk production in the early days after delivery and the effective breastfeeding process. This demonstrates that the care provided is able to support successful lactation through breastfeeding education, mentoring, and ongoing support. Successful breastfeeding is influenced not only by the mother's physiological condition but also by psychological readiness, family support, and support from healthcare professionals. According to World Health Organization recommendations, exclusive breastfeeding from the beginning of a baby's life is one of the most effective interventions in improving maternal and infant health (1).

A mother's ability to meet nutritional, rest, and self-care needs during the postpartum period is also an important indicator of successful physical adaptation. Meeting these basic needs plays a role in accelerating the recovery process, increasing breast milk production, maintaining immunity, and preventing complications in the postpartum period. Health education provided during postpartum visits helps mothers understand the importance of a balanced diet, rest management, and self-care appropriate to postpartum conditions. Women-centered services through the provision of information, support, and ongoing mentoring have been shown to improve mothers' self-care abilities and promote a more optimal recovery process. Furthermore, meeting the needs for information and health support during the postpartum period is a crucial factor influencing successful maternal adaptation and well-being after childbirth (19) (20).

The successful physical adaptation found in this case study is inseparable from the implementation of Continuity of Care, a holistic approach that allows mothers to receive continuous health monitoring throughout pregnancy, delivery, the fourth stage of labor, and the postpartum period. The ongoing relationship between midwives and mothers allows for early identification of health problems and the provision of appropriate interventions tailored to the mother's needs. Continuity of care provides healthcare workers with the opportunity to monitor the mother's overall condition, support successful breastfeeding, and enhance the mother's experience during the postpartum period. These findings align with numerous studies showing that the Continuity of Care model contributes to improved maternal care quality, maternal satisfaction, breastfeeding

success, and improved health outcomes through comprehensive, woman-centered care (2) (7).

Overall, the case study results demonstrate that implementing Continuity of Care based on a holistic approach can support successful postpartum maternal physical adaptation, characterized by optimal recovery from health conditions, successful lactation, and the mother's ability to meet self-care needs during the postpartum period. These findings reinforce the importance of continuous midwifery services in supporting maternal health and well-being during the postpartum period.

2. Psychological Adaptation

Case study results indicate that maternal psychological adaptation develops positively during the postpartum period. Early in the postpartum period, mothers express concerns about their ability to care for their babies and fulfill their role as mothers. This is a common response among postpartum mothers, especially during the initial transition to motherhood. The postpartum period is characterized not only by physical changes but also by emotional and psychological changes that require mothers to adjust to the new responsibilities of caring for their babies. These changes can lead to feelings of anxiety, doubt, and uncertainty about their ability to fulfill the maternal role (9).

The positive psychological adaptation development in this case study was evident after the mother received ongoing education, counseling, emotional support, and mentoring. These interventions helped the mother understand the changes that occur during the postpartum period, improved her coping skills, and strengthened her confidence in her ability to care for her baby. At subsequent postpartum visits, the mother demonstrated increased self-confidence, improved baby care skills, and readiness to assume her role as a mother. These results indicate that ongoing support plays a crucial role in helping the mother adapt to the psychological changes that occur after childbirth. Adequate social and emotional support is known to improve coping skills, strengthen maternal self-efficacy, and support maternal psychological well-being during the postpartum period (6) (21).

The success of a mother's psychological adaptation is also inseparable from the therapeutic relationship established between the midwife and the mother during the Continuity of Care process. A continuous relationship allows the mother to feel more comfortable expressing her feelings, concerns, and needs during the postpartum period. Effective communication and emotional support provided by the midwife can increase feelings of security, reduce anxiety, and help the mother build confidence in her maternal role. A continuous relationship between the mother and health care provider is known to increase trust, satisfaction with care, and support the mother's psychological health during the transition to parenthood. Women who receive ongoing support through the continuity of care model tend to have more positive maternity experiences and lower levels of anxiety than those who receive fragmented care (2).

The mother's increased ability to understand her baby's needs and fulfill her role as a mother also indicates a gradual psychological adjustment process. This adaptation is characterized by increased maternal skills in infant care, the ability to recognize the baby's needs, and the emergence of confidence in making decisions regarding child care. These findings align with research suggesting that health education and postpartum support can increase maternal self-efficacy, thus better preparing mothers to face the demands of the maternal role and building positive relationships with their babies (8).

The holistic approach applied in care also contributes to the successful psychological adaptation of mothers. Services not only focus on physical conditions but also address the emotional, psychological, and social needs of mothers during the postpartum period. This approach provides opportunities for mothers to receive support, share experiences, and obtain the information needed to cope with postpartum changes. Research shows that woman-centered care can improve psychological well-being, satisfaction with care, and the quality of mothers' experiences during the postpartum period (16).

Overall, the case study results demonstrate that implementing Continuity of Care based on a holistic approach can support successful psychological adaptation in mothers after childbirth. This success is characterized by reduced maternal anxiety, improved coping skills, increased confidence in caring for the baby, and greater readiness to fulfill the maternal role. These findings reinforce the importance of providing ongoing education, counseling, emotional support, and mentoring as part of comprehensive midwifery care during the postpartum period.

3. Social Adaptation

The case study results indicate that mothers' social adaptation progressed well during the postpartum period. This was evident in the active involvement of husbands and family members in helping meet the mother's daily needs, supporting baby care, providing emotional support, and accompanying the mother during the postpartum recovery process. This support created a sense of security, comfort, and appreciation, helping the mother cope with the various changes that occur during the transition to parenthood. The existence of a strong social support system is a crucial factor influencing the successful adaptation of mothers after childbirth.

The postpartum period is a period of adaptation that involves not only physical and psychological changes but also social changes in the life of the mother and family. The arrival of a baby brings about changes in roles, responsibilities, and interaction patterns within the family, requiring support from those closest to them to adapt effectively. Adequate social support helps mothers reduce the burden felt during the postpartum period and improves their ability to fulfill their role as mothers. Research shows that mothers who receive good social support tend to have lower stress levels and better adaptability than mothers who receive less support from their environment (5).

The husband's involvement in this case study demonstrates the family's crucial role in supporting the mother's postpartum recovery process. Assistance with baby care, household chores, and daily needs allows the mother sufficient rest and greater focus on recovery and caring for her baby. Husband's support also provides a sense of appreciation, emotional security, and increased confidence in adapting to the maternal role. Family involvement during the postpartum period helps mothers cope with physical and emotional changes while facilitating a smoother transition to parenthood. These findings are consistent with previous studies showing that husband support is significantly associated with lower levels of postpartum anxiety and improved maternal adjustment during the postpartum period (22).

In addition to instrumental support, emotional support provided by the husband and family also plays a crucial role in the success of a mother's social adaptation. The family's willingness to listen to complaints, provide attention, and accompany the mother during the postpartum period helps reduce feelings of anxiety and uncertainty that may arise after delivery. This emotional support provides the mother with psychological strength to cope

with the changes occurring in her life. Optimal family support is known to contribute to a mother's ability to adjust to the physical and psychological changes during the postpartum period, thus enabling a smoother adaptation to her new role as a mother (23).

The results of this case study also show that family involvement helps mothers transition into their new role as parents. The social adaptation process is easier when mothers feel they are not facing the change alone. The presence of family as a source of help and support provides opportunities for mothers to learn, share experiences, and improve their skills in caring for their babies. Support provided by husbands and families can increase feelings of security, strengthen self-confidence, and help mothers cope with the various physical, psychological, and social changes during the postpartum period. Optimal family involvement also contributes to the successful adaptation of mothers to their new role as mothers. These findings align with research showing that husband support is significantly associated with reduced anxiety levels in postpartum mothers, thus helping mothers navigate the postpartum transition more effectively (22).

The implementation of Continuity of Care based on a holistic approach in this case study also supported the mother's successful social adaptation through family involvement at every stage of care. Midwives not only provided services to the mother but also involved her husband and family in health education, infant care, and the decision-making process. This approach helped create a supportive environment for the mother, enabling a more optimal adaptation process. Family-centered care has been shown to improve the quality of the mother's postpartum experience and strengthen the social support she receives (16).

Overall, the case study results indicate that the mother's social adaptation after childbirth proceeded well thanks to the active support of her husband and family. This support helped meet the mother's physical and emotional needs, increased her sense of security and comfort, and eased the transition to parenthood. These findings reinforce the importance of family involvement in midwifery care as a strategy to support successful maternal adaptation during the postpartum period.

4. Spiritual Adaptation

The case study results indicate that mothers' spiritual adaptation during the postpartum period proceeded well. This was characterized by the mothers' ability to carry out religious activities in accordance with their health condition, demonstrate a positive attitude toward the birth experience, and express gratitude for the health of themselves and their babies. These findings indicate that mothers were able to interpret the birth experience positively and utilize spiritual values as a source of strength in coping with the changes that occur after childbirth. Spiritual adaptability is an important indicator of the postpartum recovery process because it can help mothers achieve emotional and psychological balance during the transition to parenthood.

The postpartum period is a period that involves not only physical, psychological, and social changes, but also spiritual ones. Various experiences during pregnancy, childbirth, and the postpartum period can influence how a mother views herself, her baby, and the meaning of life. In these circumstances, spirituality often serves as a coping resource, helping mothers face uncertainties, worries, and challenges during the postpartum period. Research has shown that mothers with higher spiritual well-being tend to experience lower depressive symptoms and better psychological adjustment and quality of life during the postpartum period (24).

A mother's ability to perform religious activities according to her health condition demonstrates that spiritual needs can still be fulfilled during postpartum recovery. Spiritual practices such as prayer, dhikr (remembrance of God), reading sacred scriptures, and other forms of worship may provide emotional comfort, strengthen hope, and enhance confidence in adapting to the changes associated with motherhood. These practices function as positive coping strategies and have been associated with improved spiritual health, psychological well-being, and quality of life among postpartum women (24) (25).

A mother's gratitude for her own and her baby's health also reflects positive spiritual adaptation. Gratitude is a spiritual response that enhances positive emotions, strengthens acceptance of one's circumstances, and helps individuals find meaning in life experiences. During the postpartum period, gratitude may function as a protective psychological resource, helping mothers cope with fatigue, role transitions, and the demands of caring for a newborn. Previous studies have shown that individuals with higher levels of dispositional gratitude tend to report better psychological well-being, greater life satisfaction, and more adaptive coping strategies when facing stressful life events and major life transitions (26).

Spiritual support provided during the care process contributes to the mother's successful adaptation. In a holistic approach, meeting spiritual needs is an integral part of care because health is viewed not only from a physical perspective but also encompasses psychological, social, and spiritual well-being. Midwives play a role in providing opportunities for mothers to express their beliefs, engage in spiritual practices as needed, and provide support that respects their values and beliefs. According to Dossey and Keegan (2016), holistic care that addresses the spiritual dimension can improve an individual's overall well-being and support optimal healing.

The application of Continuity of Care based on a holistic approach in this case study enabled the mother's spiritual needs to be continuously addressed from pregnancy through postpartum. The ongoing relationship between the midwife and the mother fostered open communication, allowing for better identification and facilitation of spiritual needs. Services that respect the mother's values, beliefs, and preferences have been shown to increase satisfaction with care and support a more comprehensive adaptation process (16).

Overall, the case study results indicate that postpartum maternal spiritual adaptation develops well through the ability to perform religious activities, the emergence of gratitude, and a positive attitude toward the birth experience. The spiritual support provided during care helps mothers achieve inner peace, improves their ability to cope with postpartum changes, and strengthens their readiness to fulfill their role as mothers. These findings confirm that spiritual aspects are an important part of holistic midwifery care that need to be considered to support the overall well-being of mothers during the postpartum period.

CONCLUSION

The implementation of Continuity of Care based on a holistic approach can optimally support maternal postpartum adaptation in physical, psychological, social, and spiritual aspects. Continuous midwifery care provided from pregnancy to the postpartum period helps mothers undergo a good recovery process, increases self-confidence in carrying out their role as mothers, strengthens family support, and supports spiritual well-being. The results of this case study indicate that a holistic approach integrated into Continuity of Care contributes to

successful maternal postpartum adaptation. A limitation of this study lies in the use of a case study design with a single subject, so the results cannot be generalized to a wider population. The development of the application of Continuity of Care based on a holistic approach in midwifery practice needs to be further improved, while further research is recommended using a larger number of subjects and a more robust research design to obtain more comprehensive evidence regarding the effectiveness of this approach on maternal postpartum adaptation.

Acknowledgments: We would like to express our gratitude to all parties who provided support during the implementation of this research, including the Head of the Kebakkramat II Community Health Center, Karanganyar, who provided permission, assistance, and assistance in the data collection process. We would also like to express our gratitude to the respondents who were willing to participate and cooperate during the research.

Conflicts of Interest: The authors declare no conflicts of interest related to the research, writing, or publication of this article. This research was conducted independently without any influence from any party that could have influenced the research design, data collection, data analysis, interpretation of results, or preparation of the manuscript.

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