Culturally Congruent Care for the Yemeni Woman

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**Cultural/Religious Beliefs & Practices**
- Prevalent religion: Islam
- Belief in the five pillars of Islam
- Friday: Weekly day of rest
- Importance of modesty
- Fatalistic attitudes toward life and death: Accepting illness as "will of God"
- Belief that evil eye-causes illness
- Belief in seeking healing through folk healers, pharmacists, and descendants of the Prophet Muhammad

**Pregnancy Care**
- Very few receive prenatal care: For many 4-6 hours of travel time to seek care
- Desire to be supported by other women during childbirth
- Husband absent during labor
- Woman’s authority vs. husband’s role in choice of birth attendant, and delivery position and location
- Resume work quickly after delivery
- Postpartum depression under-recognized and under-treated
- Idea of “self” may not exist
- Tolerate hardships out of cultural expectations, concern for marital insecurity, and fear of shame from community members

**Mortality Rate**

*Figure 1. Maternal mortality rate per 100,000 live births*

- Infant mortality rate 75 per 1,000 live births

**Women’s Health Issues**
- Maternal mortality
- Postpartum hemorrhage
- Malnutrition and anemia
- Infection
- Miscarriages
- Complications from unsafe abortions
- Delayed treatment
- High prevalence of home births (76%)
- Lack of prenatal care
- Young age at pregnancy
- Close birth spacing
- Low prevalence of contraception
- Female genital cutting

**Newborn Care**
- Husband attends to newborn
- Decline in breastfeeding due to:
  - Poor lactation-possibly due to khat chewing
  - Early weaning
  - Postpartum depression
- Increased bottle feeding and related concern of over-dilution with contaminated water

**Culturally Congruent Care**
- Conduct a thorough cultural assessment to discover important beliefs and needs
- Avoid stereotypes
- Preserve modesty and accommodate for female caregiver when requested
- Provide halal diet
- Encourage woman’s authority
- Discourage khat chewing during pregnancy
- Discourage/restructure female genital cutting

References available upon request from kbasham@umflint.edu or hwehbalex@umflint.edu