

UNIVERSITI TEKNOLOGI MARA

**THE USE OF TRADITIONAL AND
COMPLEMENTARY MEDICINE TO
CONCEIVE, DURING PREGNANCY
AND THE POSTPARTUM PERIOD IN
KUALA MUDA DISTRICT, KEDAH,
MALAYSIA**

ROKSANAH BINTI SHAUKAT ALI

MSc

June 2018

UNIVERSITI TEKNOLOGI MARA

**THE USE OF TRADITIONAL AND
COMPLEMENTARY MEDICINE TO
CONCEIVE, DURING PREGNANCY
AND THE POSTPARTUM PERIOD IN
KUALA MUDA DISTRICT, KEDAH,
MALAYSIA**

ROKSANAH BINTI SHAUKAT ALI

Thesis submitted in fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Science

Faculty of Pharmacy

June 2018

ABSTRACT

Traditional and complementary medicine (T&CM) has grown its roots in the Malaysian healthcare system. Though T&CM is established worldwide, the regulations on its practices are varied with limited reliable information sources. This thesis aims to determine the use of T&CM among women trying to conceive, during pregnancy and the postpartum period by exploring the prevalence, pattern and disclosure of T&CM use. In-depth qualitative interviews were carried out among three major Malaysian ethnic groups, i.e. Malays, Chinese and Indians, until the saturation point for this study was achieved. Concurrently, quantitative surveys were done on 374 participants by using self-administered questionnaires. Qualitative data were analysed thematically while quantitative data were represented via descriptive statistics. Evidence presented show that the prevalence of T&CM use is high, which has been identified in the quantitative study (n=285, 76.2%). A majority of the participants used T&CM during the postpartum period (n=237, 83.2%) and the most popular reason for use was to aid postpartum recovery (n=226, 79.3%). Although the most frequent T&CM modality used was traditional Malay massage (n=170, 59.6%), biological based therapies (n=272, 95.4%) was the highest among all five categories of T&CM. Non-users rejected T&CM mainly due to concerns of potential risks and adverse effects of T&CM (n=42, 47.2%). T&CM disclosure rate was 42.8% (n=122). The lack of concern by healthcare providers on T&CM use, the perception that T&CM will not disrupt conventional medicines and the assumption that T&CM is safe were the most popular reasons for non-disclosure of T&CM use. In conclusion, although the benefits and safety of using T&CM have not been well documented, this study reveals that women are practising T&CM to conceive, during pregnancy, and the postpartum period. The demand for T&CM has opened the floodgates for commercial traditional products into the Malaysian market, so much so that it has become out of control. Hence, healthcare professionals should realise their roles in aiding the integration of T&CM as part of the mainstream healthcare system in order to optimise patient care and prevent harm.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Firstly, I wish to thank God, Alhamdullillah, for giving me the opportunity to embark on my MSc and for completing this long and challenging journey successfully. My gratitude and thanks go to my supervisors Dr Shubashini a/p Gnanasan and Dr Maryam Farooqui who have been extremely helpful, reassuring and guided me with patience and expertise. I would like to express my gratitude to the staff of the Kuala Muda District Health Office, Kedah and all of the maternal and child health clinics in Kuala Muda District for providing me with the statistics needed, facilities and co-operation given to achieve the aims of this study.

Special thanks to my lovely husband _____ for his patience with me over these past two years; helping to manage our children when needed and everything else, and to our wonderful sons _____ as well as our beautiful daughter _____ for making my MSc journey a smooth one.

I would also like to thank all of the interviewees and survey respondents who sacrificed their time to offer their insight into my research. The information that they have given have been crucial in achieving the goals of this thesis.

Finally, this thesis is dedicated to the loving memory of my very dear late father _____ and to my mother _____, as well as my parents-in-law _____ for their fortitude and determination to educate me. This piece of victory is dedicated to all of my family. Thank you for the immeasurable love and support you have shown me throughout this journey and always.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
CONFIRMATION BY PANEL OF EXAMINERS	ii
AUTHOR'S DECLARATION	iii
ABSTRACT	iv
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	v
TABLE OF CONTENTS	vi
LIST OF TABLES	xi
LIST OF FIGURES	xiii
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS	xiv
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 Research Background	1
1.2 The Role of the Malaysian Public Healthcare System for Perinatal Care	2
1.3 Problem Statement	3
1.4 Objectives of Study	5
1.5 Significance of the Study	6
1.6 Thesis Layout	7
CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW	9
2.1 Definition of Traditional and Complementary Medicine (T&CM)	9
2.2 Worldwide Pattern of T&CM Use	10
2.3 T&CM Use in Malaysia	13
2.4 Demographic Characteristics of T&CM Users among Pregnant and Postpartum Women	16
2.5 Prevalence and Modalities of T&CM Use	17
2.5.1 Use to Conceive	19
2.5.2 Use during Pregnancy	21
2.5.3 Use during Postpartum	24
2.6 Reasons for T&CM Use during Pregnancy and the Postpartum Period	27
2.7 Sources of Information on T&CM Use	28