

An Investigation into the Use of Traditional Herbal *Pilis* in the Management of Postpartum Headaches

Ana Soraya Siyami¹, Diah Atmarina Yuliani¹

¹Midwifery Profesional Education, Faculty of Health Sciences,
Universitas Muhammadiyah Purwokerto, Indonesia

ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

DOI:

[10.30595/pshms.v8i.2069](https://doi.org/10.30595/pshms.v8i.2069)

Submitted:

July 29, 2025

Accepted:

Sept 22, 2025

Published:

Oct 23, 2025

Keywords:

Postpartum care; Postpartum
mother; *Pilis*

ABSTRACT

After childbirth, there is a significant decrease in estrogen levels in a woman's body. This hormonal fluctuation is known to contribute to the onset of postpartum headaches. Studies have shown that approximately 40% of women experience headaches following delivery. According to the World Health Organization (WHO, 2010), one form of traditional postpartum care still practiced today involves the use of herbal remedies, including both ingestible herbal medicine and topical applications such as *pilis*. *Pilis* is a traditional herbal paste applied to the forehead, believed to alleviate headaches and dizziness, reduce blurred vision experienced during labor, restore physical energy, and improve sleep quality. This study aims to examine the use of *pilis* as part of postpartum care in relieving headaches in a 31-year-old postpartum woman (Mrs. T) residing in Papringan Village, Banyumas. The *pilis* was applied daily to the forehead throughout the postpartum period, beginning on the first day after childbirth and continuing through the 42th day. The study results showed that mothers felt comfortable and warm, and that the dizziness and headaches caused by fatigue during childbirth were reduced, leading to fewer headaches while caring for their babies. The study concluded that there were positive effects for mothers who used the traditional herbal remedy *Pilis* during the postpartum period.

This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/).



Corresponding Author:

Ana Soraya Siyami

Midwifery Profesional Education

Faculty of Health Sciences, Universitas Muhammadiyah Purwokerto

Soeparjo Roestam Street KM 7, Banyumas, Indonesia

Email: ana.sorayaa05@gmail.com

1. INTRODUCTION

Indonesia has a rich and noble cultural diversity. It consists of various ethnic groups spread across the archipelago, each with its own distinct culture. These cultures are believed to offer valuable contributions to different aspects of life. One such cultural heritage is traditional medicine in Indonesia, which has been passed down through generations. A key part of traditional medicine is the use of abundant local spices, which are known to be beneficial for the body. People often choose traditional treatments because they are relatively affordable compared to modern medicines, making them more accessible to the general public. Other reasons include the availability of ingredients in the surrounding environment, the simplicity of the

preparation process and tools, and the minimal negative side effects due to the absence of chemical substances. (Sepiwiryanti et al., 2024)

Cultural beliefs and traditions surrounding postpartum care are still widely practiced among many communities. People believe that postpartum care can bring positive and beneficial effects for mothers. Indonesia has a diverse range of postpartum care practices, each with its own regional characteristics and cultural uniqueness. (Hubaedah, 2024)

According to Kalsum (2023), traditional medicines used for mothers who are in postpartum function to help repair reproductive organs so that they recover to their pre-pregnancy state. Traditional medicinal plants used after giving birth are some that are drunk and some are used as external medicines (applied), postpartum care can help detect complications, such as infections in the reproductive organs, whether from external (exogenous) or internal (endogenous) sources.

One traditional postpartum practice is the use of herbal medicine, including internal remedies like jamu and external treatments such as *pilis* (a traditional herbal paste applied to the forehead). Traditional remedies have been widely accepted across many countries around the world. In regions such as Africa, Asia, and Latin America, traditional products are commonly used as complementary treatments alongside primary healthcare. (safari et al., 2023)

For example, *pilis* has long been recognized in traditional culture as an external treatment to relieve headaches, reduce blurred vision during straining, restore energy, improve sleep quality, and offer various other health benefits. (Rahmawati et al., 2024)

There are many benefits associated with the use of *pilis*. One of the main benefits is its ability to relieve dizziness or headaches caused by fatigue during childbirth and while caring for a newborn. *Pilis* is also believed to improve blood circulation, help maintain eye health, and prevent the rise of white blood cells to the head, which is thought to cause discomfort. (Tradisional & Nifas, 2022)

2. RESEARCH METHOD

This report uses a case study design, with the research subject being Mrs. T, a 31-year-old woman living in Papringan Village, Banyumas. The intervention involved the use of *pilis* during the postpartum period, which lasted for 40 days. Primary data were collected through interviews with Mrs. T regarding traditional postpartum practices. Documentation and literature review were also conducted to obtain secondary data.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Result

Primary data collection was carried out on January 12, 2025. Subjective data revealed that the mother had given birth 6 hours earlier, complained of pain at the perineal suture site and mild dizziness, and stated that she had no history of any illness. Objective data showed that the mother was in generally good condition, with clear consciousness (*compos mentis*), blood pressure of 116/76 mmHg, pulse of 75 beats/minute, respiratory rate of 23 breaths/minute, and a body temperature of 37.0°C. The examination results indicated that the mother was in normal and healthy condition. Midwifery care provided included informing the mother and her family of the examination results, and advising the mother to begin side to-side mobilization (right and left lateral positions).

Primary data collection on January 18 revealed that the mother stated there is a cultural tradition in her community of using *pilis* during the postpartum period. This practice is believed to help relieve the dizziness commonly experienced by postpartum mothers. The ingredients commonly used include turmeric, aromatic ginger (*kencur*), ginger, and *lengengan* leaves, which are then ground into a paste and applied to the mother's forehead. This remedy is used throughout the postpartum period.

On February 22, 2025, the mother stated that she had completed her postpartum period and reported that during the use of *pilis* from one day after giving birth to 42 days of postpartum period, she felt comfortable and warm, and rarely experienced dizziness or headaches due to fatigue during childbirth and while caring for the baby.

3.2 Discussion

The research findings indicate that the use of *pilis* during the postpartum period had a positive impact on the mother. *Pilis* is an external herbal remedy applied to the forehead for 40 days after childbirth. Based on the interview results, *pilis* is believed to improve blood circulation and relieve headaches. From a medical perspective, *pilis* also helps to maintain eye health and reduce dizziness. This has been supported by Fadillah (2024), who stated that *pilis* contains natural ingredients such as aromatic ginger (*kencur*), turmeric, ginger, and *lengengan* leaves. Each of these ingredients has its own health benefits. For example: *Kencur* contains analgesic properties and helps lower blood pressure. Turmeric is useful for reducing pain and providing a cooling sensation. The preparation method involves grinding all the ingredients, mixing them with water, and applying the paste to the forehead.

One of the main ingredients used is lenglengan leaves. According to Yuniantini et al. (2020), these leaves contain aromatic compounds that help reduce stress, giving a warm and soothing sensation to the head.

Research conducted by Aprilia et al. (2023) shows that traditional remedies such as *pilis* have been used as postpartum therapy for centuries and have been proven effective. Communities choose traditional treatments because they are more affordable and their benefits have been passed down and proven across generations.

4. CONCLUSION

There is a positive effect on postpartum mothers after using the traditional herbal remedy *pilis* for 40 days during the postpartum period. Many benefits are gained from using *pilis*, one of which is the relief of dizziness or headaches caused by fatigue during childbirth and while caring for their baby.

REFERENCES

- Aprilia, L., Rachmalia, N., & Mukhlisah, I. (2023). *Artikel review : Perawatan tradisional Indonesia bagi ibu pada masa nifas*. 4(1).
- Fadillah, F. (2024). *The effect of pilis therapy on reducing headaches (Cepalgia) in postpartum mothers at the Niar clinic , Timbang Deli regency , Medan Amplas district in 2023*. 15(01), 308–317. <https://doi.org/10.54209/eduhealth.v15i01>
- Hubaedah, A. (2024). *The Relationship Between Giving Pilis (Rice , Turmeric , Sand Ginger , Ginger , Lime) and Postpartum Maternal Health*. 16(1), 95–100.
- Rahmawati, S., Abrilliant, P. S., & Sulistiyowati, T. I. (2024). *Etnokonservasi Tanaman Obat di Pulau Jawa pada Masa Perawatan Pasca Bersalin*. 102–111.
- Safari, F. R., Sinaga, E.B. (2022). *Pemanfaatan Pilis Wangi Dan Jamu Pasca Melahirkan Sebagai terapi tradisional perawatan nifas di wilayah kerja klinik anugrah binjai tahun2022*. 4(2)
- Sepiwiryanti, W., Sepiwiryanti, W., Putri, V. D., Rini, P., & Soleha, M. (2024). *Kearifan Lokal Di Poskesdes Santapan Timur Tahun 2023 Wika Sepiwiryanti , dkk. 13, 27–35*.
- Tradisional, T., & Nifas, P. (2022). *Kata kunci : pengabdian masyarakat ; Pemanfaatan Pilis Wangi dan Jamu ; Terapi Tradisional Perawatan Nifas*. 4(2), 39–45.
- Yuniantini, U., Bahar, B., Farid, M., Sinrang, A. W., & Demmalino, E. B. (2020). *International Journal of Multicultural and Multireligious Understanding Qualitative Study on Maternal Postpartum Health Care on Malayan People in Pontianak*. 391–397.