

## The experience of first-time mothers in rural Indonesia: a phenomenological study

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### Abstrak

The transition to motherhood may be difficult for some women. Part of the difficulty arises from the many new roles a woman must add to her preexisting roles. Most women make a successful transition to motherhood and adapt to their new roles. Taking on the role of motherhood and caring for an infant is satisfying (Brown, Lumley, Small, & Asbury, 1994; Lupton, 2000). However even within this group, women will report challenges in their lives, such as, trying to incorporate the infant into their busy lives. Positive appraisal and support from partners, family and health care professionals helps with a successful transition.

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While much has been written about the experiences of North American women in their transition to motherhood, there is little research-based information about the experiences of early motherhood in Indonesia. Anthropological studies examine becoming a mother as a "rite of passage" for a woman largely dealing with motherhood as being unproblematic. No nursing studies were located that examined this important phenomenon within the Indonesian culture. The need for knowledge about the experience of mothers among Indonesian women is important. Although motherhood is highly valued women can be expected to meet many of the same challenges that their counterparts in North America will meet as they become mothers for the first time. Many Indonesian women many at a young age and subsequently become mothers very early in their lives. Indonesian women experience high uncertainty about childbirth outcomes because there are high maternal and infant mortality rates (Departemen Kesehatan R.I., 1999). Many Indonesian women continue to follow traditional practices of postpartum care that make early motherhood highly ritualized. This may lead to conflict if health professionals do not recognize the importance of these practices to the mother and family. In order to plan effective nursing interventions to meet the health needs of new mothers and to assist them with a successful transition, it is important to have a better understanding of their situation. This study is an exploration of early motherhood among first time mothers in Indonesia through a phenomenological approach.