

Course Title: MOD5-MW340-Postpartum Physical Assessment**Credits: 0.50**

Course Description: This course is designed for students to gain a thorough understanding of the physiological and anatomical changes of the postnatal period. The student will learn how to conduct a physical examination during the early postpartum period, which includes the basic skills above, as well as auscultation of the woman's heart and lungs; checking for hemorrhoids, varicosities of the extremities, edema, calf tenderness or heat, and reflexes. Students learn to evaluate the involution of the uterus and the amount of lochia and speed of involution. Students will learn to evaluate breastfeeding and how it affects the involution process. Students will evaluate the vagina and perineum immediate postpartum, during the first 24 – 48 hours postpartum, and conducting perineal assessment for bruising, edema, hematoma, healing of any repair, inflammation, or suppuration. Students evaluate the woman's breasts and the changes of the breast associated with breastfeeding. The students will gain an understanding of how to assess the breasts in the early postpartum period, including demonstrating the presence of colostrums and management of the nipples for breastfeeding women. Students will also learn how to provide counseling and support for breastfeeding.

Learning Objectives:

A: Student will be able to answer the Study Questions (below).

B: Student will be able to demonstrate thorough knowledge of the Clinical Skills required for this course (below).

C: Student will demonstrate thorough knowledge of the MANA Core Competencies for Midwives required for this course (below).

D: Student will be able to demonstrate knowledge of any new information in the area of study.

Learning Activities:

I. Student Reads required texts.

II. Student Completes study questions.

III. Preceptor elaborates on study questions.

IV. Clinical Skills and Core Competencies training consists of the following (may take place at clinical visits or at childbirth education classes):

1. Preceptor Explanation of	Safe, evidence-based midwifery care for the individual Clinical Skills and Core Competencies including etiology, sequelae, appropriate management and follow-up for the individual patient, appropriate times and reasons for consult and referral, access to relevant resources and information, complete, thorough and timely record keeping, appropriate, professional, and compassionate management of every task involved, receptiveness and responsiveness to patient's concerns. The Explanation will include a discussion of midwifery decisions and actions as they relate to possible outcomes and their wider impact, based on the Midwives Model of Care®.
2. Preceptor Demonstration of	
3. Student Practice of	
4. Student Demonstration of	

V. Student researches and presents to the preceptor relevant latest developments in academic and clinical midwifery as relevant to the subject.

VI. Student/Preceptor discussion.

VII. Role-playing and Clinical Interactions: practice clinical interactions, assist with actual clinicals.

Learning Materials / Resources:

(Please use textbooks less than 5 years old, or most recent edition)

1. Frye, Anne. Holistic Midwifery: A Comprehensive Textbook for Midwives in Homebirth Practice, Vol. 2: Care of the Mother and Baby from the Onset of Labor Through the First Hours After Birth. Labrys Press. 2004.
2. Weaver, Pam and Evans, Sharon K. Practical Skills Guide for Midwifery, 4th Edition. Morningstar Publishing Co. Wasilla. 2007.
3. MEAC Abbreviated NARM Skills Form.
4. MANA Core Competencies for Midwives
5. Midwives Model of Care®.
6. Internet links as needed for latest developments in midwifery care:
[The Cochrane Collaboration](#)
[EBSCO](#)
[National Library of Medicine](#)
[PubMed](#)
[Medline](#)
[SCIRUS](#)
[Medscape](#)
[World Health Organization](#)

Evaluation Tools / Methods:

1. Answers to study questions: Student must achieve at least 80% correct to pass. The preceptor evaluates each answer for correctness and explains the questions that were incorrect. This counts for 85% of the final grade.
2. Clinical Skills: Student must demonstrate thorough knowledge of each skill. This counts for 5% of the final grade. *Academic courses CAN be completed without the student achieving "mastery" of each skill*, however the skills on the MEAC Abbreviated NARM Skills Form (which is a separate requirement) are not filled in until the student achieves Mastery* of the skill.
3. MANA Core Competencies: Student's ability to apply MANA Core Competencies for Midwives in discussion to simulated and real-life situations. This counts for 5% of the final grade.

Evaluation of NARM Skills and MANA Core Competencies: The student demonstrates thorough knowledge to the satisfaction of the preceptor in the following areas:

**The student will be able to, in accordance with safe, evidence-based midwifery care, explain the condition, verbalize etiology and sequelae, verbalize appropriate management for the individual patient, follow up appropriately, consult and refer appropriately, access resources and information, accomplish complete, thorough and timely record keeping, appropriately manage every task involved correctly, professionally, and compassionately, while being receptive and responsive to patient's concerns. She/he will be able to explain her decisions and actions as they relate to possible outcomes and their wider impact.*

4. Student presentation of new information in area of study. The preceptor evaluates the correctness of the information presented. This counts for 5% of the grade.

Study Questions

1. Describe how the uterus is assessed postpartum and the significance of the findings. Give not only immediate postpartum changes, but those expected in the first two weeks as well.
2. Describe the amount and color of lochia and the names given to each type. How is the lochia evaluated postpartum and what is the rationale?
3. Describe the expected course of healing of the vagina and perineum from the time of birth to 6 weeks postpartum. How is this evaluated?
4. Describe the physiological mechanisms of breast feeding and how these can be evaluated.
5. Discuss how the breasts are evaluated during early lactation and what is the rationale.
6. Explain what blood pressure should be postpartum and how it is evaluated. What is the rationale for checking it and the timing?
7. Cite normal temperature postpartum and how it is evaluated. What differences are expected between the first 24 hours and succeeding days and why? What is the timing for temperature evaluation? What factors affect pulse rate postpartum, how and when is it assessed, and what are the parameters of normal?
8. Cite when the renal pelvis and uterus return to normal postpartum. How and when are these evaluated? How does these affect renal function in the first days and weeks postpartum?
9. Discuss the average weight loss following delivery. Why does this occur? How and when is this evaluated and why?
10. Describe what the woman's appetite will be like just after birth and why. What bowel problems may come up and why?
11. Explain the prognosis for striae and why.
12. Discuss the prognosis for diastasis recti and why.

13. Explain how the abdominal wall is assessed and describe the actions that can be taken.
14. Discuss how and when the postpartum woman is assessed for leukocytes. What are the parameters of normal and how is puerperal infection ruled out?
15. Discuss how and when the postpartum woman is evaluated for anemia. How is anemia ruled out and what are the implications if she is anemic?
16. Discuss how and when the postpartum woman is evaluated for postpartum blues. What are the psychological and physiologic bases for this? What actions can be taken to mitigate this?
17. Discuss how and when a grieving postpartum mother is evaluated. What stages is she expected to go through and what is the expected timing of these? What differences in grieving are expected between the death of a child and the birth of a deformed or impaired child? How are these addressed?

Clinical Skills (NARM Skills)

I. Midwifery Counseling, Education and Communication

- (1)-I A. Provides interactive support and counseling and/or referral services to the mother regarding her relationships with her significant others and other healthcare providers
- (2)-I B. Provides education, support, counseling and/or referral for the possibility of less-than-optimal pregnancy outcomes
- (3)-I C. Provides education and counseling based on maternal health/reproductive/family history and on-going risk assessment
- (5)-I E. Educates the mother and her family/support unit to share responsibility for optimal pregnancy outcome
- (6)-I F. Educates the mother concerning the natural physical and emotional processes of pregnancy, labor, birth and postpartum
- (7)-I G. Applies the principles of informed consent
- (8)-I H. Provides individualized care
- (9)-I I. Advocates for the mother during pregnancy, birth and postpartum
- I J. Provides education, counseling and/or referral, where appropriate for:
 - (10)-I J 1. Genetic counseling for at-risk mothers
 - (11)-I J 2. Abuse issues: emotional, physical and sexual
 - (13)-I J 4. Diet, nutrition and supplements
 - (14)-I J 5. Effects of smoking, drugs and alcohol use
 - (15)-I J 6. Situations requiring an immediate call to the midwife
 - (16)-I J 7. Sexually transmitted diseases
 - (17)-I J 8. Complications
 - (18)-I J 9. Environmental risk factors
 - (19)-I J 10. Newborn care including normal/abnormal newborn activity, responses, vital signs, appearance, behavior, etc
 - (20)-I J 11. Postpartum care concerning complications and self-care

II. General Healthcare Skills

II D. Demonstrates the use of instruments and equipment including:

(26)-II D 3. Blood pressure cuff

(41)-II D 18. Stethoscope

V. Postpartum

(131)-V A. Performs postpartum reevaluation of mother and baby at appropriate intervals

(133)-V C. Provides contraceptive education and counseling

(134)-V D. Assesses for and treats jaundice

(135)-V E. Provides direction for care of circumcised and uncircumcised penis

(136)-V *F. Performs thorough and appropriate maternal four- to six-week postpartum check-up

(137)-V G. Knows treatments for sore nipples

(138)-V H. Knows treatments for mastitis

(139)-V I. Knows breastfeeding referral resources

Core Competencies (MANA Core Competencies for Midwives)

I. Guiding Principles of Practice.

The midwife provides care according to the following principles:

1 H. Midwives recognize the empowerment inherent in the childbearing experience and strive to support women to make informed decisions and take responsibility for their own well-being.

1 J. Midwives synthesize clinical observations, theoretical knowledge, intuitive assessment and spiritual awareness as components of a competent decision making process.

1 K. Midwives value continuity of care throughout the childbearing cycle and strive to maintain continuous care within realistic limits.

1 L. Midwives understand that the parameters of “normal” vary widely and recognize that each pregnancy and birth is unique.

II. General Knowledge and Skills

The midwife provides care incorporating certain concepts, skills and knowledge from a variety of health and social sciences including, but not limited to:

2 B. Human anatomy and physiology relevant to childbearing

2 C. Community standards of care for women and their developing infants during the childbearing cycle, including midwifery and bio-technical medical standards and the rationale for and limitations of such standards

2 M. The ability to develop, implement and evaluate an individualized plan for midwifery care.

2 N. Woman-centered care, including the relationship between the mother, infant and their larger support community.

2 O. Knowledge and application of various health care modalities as they apply to the childbearing cycle

IV. Care During Labor, Birth and Immediately Thereafter

The midwife provides health care, support, and information to women throughout labor, birth and the hours immediately thereafter. She determines the need for consultation or referral as appropriate. The midwife uses a foundation of knowledge and/or skill which includes the following:

4 B. Parameters and methods for evaluating maternal and fetal well-being during labor, birth and immediately thereafter, including relevant historical data.

4 H. Fluid and nutritional requirements during labor, birth and immediately thereafter.

4 I. Assessment of and support for maternal rest and sleep as appropriate during the process of labor, birth and immediately thereafter.

4 J. Causes of, evaluation of and appropriate treatment for variations which occur during the course of labor, birth and immediately thereafter.

V. Postpartum Care

The entry-level midwife provides health care, support and information to women throughout the postpartum period. She determines the need for consultation or referral as appropriate. The midwife uses a foundation of knowledge and/or skill, which includes, but is not limited, the following:

5 A. Anatomy and physiology of the mother during the postpartum period.

5 B. Lactation support and appropriate breast care including evaluation of, identification of and treatments for problems with nursing.

5 C. Parameters and methods for evaluating and promoting maternal well-being during the postpartum period.

5 D. Causes of, evaluation of, and treatment for maternal discomforts during the postpartum period.

5 E. Emotional, psychosocial and sexual variations during the postpartum period. Maternal nutritional requirements during the postpartum period including methods of nutritional evaluation and Counseling.

5 F. Causes of, evaluation of, and treatments for problems arising during the postpartum period.

5 G. Support, information and referral for family planning methods, as the individual woman desires.