Abstract: This study was conducted among postpartum mothers’, elders and traditional birth attendants at the Poblacion barangays of Vintar, Ilocos Norte to provide detailed description of the beliefs and practices on postpartum care.

Observation, tape-recorded unstructured interview, focus group discussion and documentation of the cultural practices were the main tool used in gathering data. The data gathered were transcribed and categorized, analyzed and interpreted according to themes based on minor problems of the study and their scientific explanation were determined using available studies and literature.

Cultural beliefs and practices were known by the participants for elders, significant persons and traditional birth attendants who had previous experiences with cultural postpartum care.

Findings on Nutrition revealed that culturally recommended food or cultural food preferences are found to have scientific meanings as documented in books and studies on nutrition. These practices are primarily directed to improve lactation, provide energy and regulate the physiologic changes that accompany delivery towards the end of postpartum period. On the other hand, the cultural restrictions on food have been found to have no scientific explanations, however, the participants follow these cultural beliefs they believed that these would prevent the occurrence of illness and discomforts. Postpartum mothers who experience illness and discomforts during the period and later years in life are always regarded as failure due to non-compliance with the culturally prescribed diet. Furthermore, cultural drinks derived from barks of trees have no scientific or therapeutic use but the participants still follow the elders who prescribe these.

Hygienic practices on the breast are geared towards cleanliness, prevention of pain, discomfort and swelling and to improve milk
production to meet the demand of the newborn for nourishment. Some of the beliefs and practices on breast care have scientific bases. On perineal care, all the participants practiced perineal hygiene in harmony with the practices postulated by authorities in obstetrics.

Bathing practice for postpartum mothers is not similar to ordinary bath. The performance usually starts the day after delivery using warm water with the omission of hair shampoo until permitted by elders. Warm water is said to be beneficial and has scientifically proven advantages but the non-inclusion of hair shampoo, though harmless, makes the mother feel a bit of discomfort.

The participants showed much concern of their episiotomy or laceration. Most of them are aware of the importance of wound care because this would promote wound healing and aromatic smell of the mother. Decoct guava leaves are used in caring for the episiotomy or laceration.

On lactational practices, all the participants allowed their babies to suck their breasts immediately after delivery. Some participants massage their breast, others used water dipper in shaking their breasts and some just shake to facilitate milk production.

*Dadang* is performed to dry-up the body, to prevent chilliness and for the body to be “well cooked.” This practice is considered to be beneficial since heat has lots of therapeutic effect established scientifically not only for postpartum mothers but for all ages. Likewise, the practice of *sidor*, which uses heat, varies among the participants. This practice soothes healing tissues, decreases inflammation by vasodilatation to the area and therefore effectively reduces discomfort.

The binder applied at the waist and hips are therapeutically effective in promoting involution of the internal reproductive organ. It further relieves pain and discomfort, therefore the practice I considered beneficial.

Cultural massage is considered beneficial for physical and psychological harmony and has sound scientific basis. However, this practice depends largely on the availability of the *mangngilot* and the availability of the mother to compensate for the services.

Resumption of sexual activity varies the participants, from 3 months to 6 months. They believed that engaging in early
sexual contact has no detrimental effect on the health of the mother.

Based on the findings of the study, majority of the cultural beliefs and practices have scientific bases, therefore, these should be utilized and reconciled with the modern postpartum practices to give more intense and effective result for health promotion and health maintenance.