

**FACTORS INFLUENCING THE
CHILD-REARING PRACTICES
OF RECENTLY MIGRATED
CHINESE AND EAST INDIAN WOMEN
WITH CHILDREN AGED 0-6¹**

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Introduction

By the year 2001, it is expected that one in four Canadians will be from an invisible minority group. In 1992 the majority of immigrants to Canada were from Hong Kong, Philippines, and India (Samuel, 1992). A document titled “Our Future Through Diversity” reported that the majority of new immigrants to the city of Calgary had in fact come from the aforementioned three countries (City of Calgary, 1996). “Between 1986 and 1991, 819,000 immigrants and refugees came to live in Canada. One hundred and fifty-seven thousand (approximately 19 percent) were children under the age of 12” (Beiser, Dion, Gogowiec, Hyman, & Vu, 1995, p. 67). This pattern clearly indicates the importance for pursuing information that will assist new immigrations in their assimilation into Canadian society.

People of different nationalities make concerted efforts to transmit their cherished cultural beliefs and values to their children in the new environment. From the literature review, it is evident there not only is a paucity of research addressing child-rearing practices of non-Western societies but also variations in child-rearing practices among the people belonging to the dominant cultural group (Caucasian-Canadian) in the Canadian society (Lambert, 1987). This has resulted in a lack of understanding of the values and beliefs that guide the child-rearing practices of new immigrants of varied ethnic and cultural orientations.

Recent migration to a new country is characterized by more than one transition. Tyhurst (1957) defined transition as “a passage or changes from one place or state or act

or set of circumstances to another” (p. 150). Migration requires that one must make adjustments in all aspects of one’s existence in the host country. Taft (1985) commented that assimilation into a new culture involves a resocialization process, which requires aspects of the psychological functioning. For example, new attitude, learning the new language, finding a job, developing new support systems, and ensuring that the beliefs and practices of one’s culture are adhered to in raising and relating to one’s children in the new environment (Waxler-Morrison, Anderson & Richardson, 1990). Rosenthal, Bell, Demetriou & Efklides (1989) emphasized that “language difficulties may be overcome, new rules for social intercourse may be learned, but central core values may remain at variance with those of the host culture” (p. 58). The literature review reveals that there clearly is a need to conduct research with immigrant populations to develop our understanding of their core values and patterns of child rearing.

The purpose of this study was to examine the factors that influence child-rearing practices of recently migrated (up to three years) East Indian and Chinese women with children ranging in age from birth to six years. The reason for examining child-rearing practices of women from these two cultural groups is based on the fact that a high percentage of newly immigrated women seeking help from public health nurses in the city of Calgary are of East Indian and Chinese origins. The study also attempted to uncover the adjustment challenges these women encounter while raising their children in a new society. The research question was: “What factors influence child-rearing practices of recently immigrated (period up to 36 months) East Indian and Chinese women with young children (infancy to six years) in a new culture (Canadian society)?” The objectives of the study were to:

1. Develop our knowledge and understanding of the factors that influence child-rearing practices of recently immigrated women of East Indian and Chinese origins.
2. Develop our knowledge and understanding of the dominant and variant child-rearing practices of recently migrated women of East Indian and Chinese origins.
3. Utilize the generated knowledge in the provision of health care for recently migrated women of East Indian, Chinese, and any other cultural groups as they make adjustments in their child-rearing practices in the Canadian society.
4. Disseminate widely via presentations and publications findings of this study to affect care of recently migrated child-rearing women and their families.

Significance of the Study

Clearly, there is a need to conduct research with immigrant populations to develop and enhance our understanding of their patterns of child rearing. Lin & Fu (1990) emphasized the need to inquire into child-rearing practices among parents of Chinese origin and Caucasian-American parents in the United States. The rationale for such an inquiry is warranted because of the need to generate new knowledge and to expand upon the existing knowledge “about patterns of socialization among immigrants who have to accommodate to the social expectations of their culture of origin and their culture of relocation” (Lin & Fu, 1990, p. 429). The findings of contemporary studies will be very beneficial in determining contextual, personal, and cultural factors that affect child-rearing practices of recently migrated women of different cultural groups.

The findings of this study have highlighted the benefits and values cherished by a group of East Indian and Chinese women while raising their children in the Canadian society. This kind of information is integral in directing professionals who care for

immigrant child-rearing women. Public health nurses provide information to parents about child rearing on a daily basis. This information is provided in clinic settings, during home visits and via telephone conversations. A large number of nurses spend an enormous amount of time assisting newly immigrated parents with child-rearing practices. Other professionals such as social workers, psychologists, psychiatrists, physicians, and community leaders play a very significant role in assisting immigrant families adapt to the Canadian society.

It is hoped that the findings of this study will assist those who support newly immigrated families in their transition into Canadian society. The aim is to provide care that is congruent with the needs of individual mothers and families.

Relevant Literature

Regardless of their cultural orientation, parents play a significant role in helping their children become honourable and contributing members of society. They accomplish this by nurturing and guiding their children, engaging in problem solving with them, and modeling by “setting examples” of culturally acceptable ways of living and solving problems. This is done by adhering to the beliefs, values, and appropriate conduct accepted in their culture. Cultural context is central is parenting styles, parent-parent and parent-child interactions (Swick, 1985). These interactions reflect cultural expectations. According to Swick (1985), “parenting is carried on amidst many cultural signals, not all of which are consistent with each other or necessarily ‘good’ for children. Parenting context often dictates how these style issues are dealt with in the life span” (p. 82).

Foss (1996) calls cultural beliefs and values “internalized script.” She states that “when individuals and families move to a new country and culture, they take this internalized script” (p. 80). According to Foss, it is used in its original entirety or in an integrated form that reflects assimilation of some of the new culture in the child-rearing practices of women.

Lewis (1964) states that “culture as a design for living is passed from generation to generation” (p. 150). Lewis asserts that cultural difference in values and beliefs influence cognitive perceptions, psychological evolution, mental development, and logical reasoning. Foss (1996) makes a poignant point in stating that “parenting patterns frequently are judged by the standards of the country of residence even if there are conflicts between the two sets of standards.” There seems to be an underlying assumption by lay persons and professionals alike that characteristics of ‘American good parenting’

are universal” (p. 84). This assumption conveys that child socialization processes different from the Euro-American set of values appear to be deviant (Zayas & Solai, 1994). Furthermore, it is possible that the belief that “American good parenting” is universal may contribute to convincing health care people that child-rearing practices of people of different cultural orientations are of little consequence and hence are not worth inquiring into. This belief has the potential to ignore cultural context of child-rearing practices of new immigrant families and to force new immigrant families to socialize their young children according to the beliefs and values of the dominant culture. The result would be a mismatch in the care provided to the immigrant population. A significant finding from a pilot study using the grounded theory method was that public health nurses, during their interactions with the families, failed to inquire about the usual parenting practices and about immigration-related health problems (Foss, 1995). Siegel (1988) noted the lack of studies regarding culturally influenced parental beliefs, values, and behaviours pertaining to child rearing and concluded that child-rearing practices are not generalizable across cultural groups, hence the need to explore with people of different cultural groups their beliefs in regard to raising children. It is essential, however, to be aware that cultural values are the foundation of people’s biases, their perceptions, and how they view parenting should be conducted (Brown, 1997).

Leninger (1991) stated that it is essential for health care givers to “discover human care diversities and universalities in relation to world view, social structure, and other dimensions. They must then discover ways to provide culturally congruent care to people of different or similar cultures in order to either maintain or regain their well being and health, or face death in a culturally appropriate way” (p. 39). Goodnow and

Collins (1990) asserted that becoming knowledgeable about parents' values and beliefs sheds light not only about their child-rearing ambitions but also about other relationships such as to the family and to the society at large. Thus, it is critical, while caring for people of different cultural groups, that professionals are cognizant of the values, beliefs, and practices of people (Leninger, 1991).

Health care providers need to be knowledgeable of the fact that manifestation of child rearing similar to the new culture does not necessarily mean alteration in the cultural core values. The ease with which acculturation is enhanced depends on similarities between the culture of origin and the new culture (Rosenthal, Bell, Demetriou & Efklides, 1989). Rosenthal, et al. (1989) affirm that "it is clear that adaptation does not proceed on an all-or-none basis since some aspects of the new culture will be easier to acquire than others" (p. 58). According to Wolf (1970) it is reasonable to expect that child-rearing practices will be slower to change than other aspects of the culture.

Hackett & Hackett (1994) in their study compared child-rearing practices of Gujarati mothers (N=100) from East Manchester with white British-born mothers (N=100). Each sample of mothers had children aged 4 to 7 years. The data was collected using semi-structured interviews. Noticeable differences were found in child-rearing practices in the areas of discipline, feeding, sleeping arrangements, and toilet training. Using a sample of 76 mothers, Kelley & Tseng (1992) examined differences in parenting techniques and goals in 38 immigrant Chinese and 38 Caucasian-American mothers of 3 to 8 year-olds. The data was collected using self-administered questionnaires. The results suggested that both Chinese and American mothers have similar child-rearing

goals, however, immigrant Chinese mothers depend on traditional Chinese methods of socialization to accomplish the desired goals.

It is important to note that the authoritarian parenting styles of East Indian and Chinese parents is most often equated with aggression, mistrust, and domination rather than being interpreted as parents who are concerned, caring, and involved in ensuring that their children are well prepared to deal with life challenges. Specifically, Chinese mothers are influenced by the term “child training” which demands an immense amount of time, energy, and sacrifice on the part of the mother to ensure that her child is well trained to meet the socially approved standards of the cultural heritage. Chao (1994) states that “this training, then, takes place in the context of supportive, highly involved, and close mother-child relationship” (p. 1112). Lau and Cheng (1987) assert that the goal is to foster family cohesion and harmony.

In a cross-cultural study, Chao (1996) recruited 48 immigrant Chinese and 50 European-American mothers with preschool-aged children to compare beliefs concerning the role of parenting to children’s achievement in school. All the mothers for this study were interviewed face-to-face and were asked how they feel their parenting or child rearing affects their children’s school achievement (p. 406). Chao found that for Chinese mothers, their children’s school performance was the result of successful parenting. A Chinese mother in her study stated that “academics is a family thing.” Chao found that this was conveyed consistency by the Chinese mothers in her sample. The substance of the message was that mothers play a pivotal role in ensuring the children’s school success, whereas European American mothers expressed that their children’s school

performance should not be the focus of their parenting. From this finding, it is apparent that child-rearing practices are influenced by cultural value orientations.

It is important to keep in mind that the process of socialization aims to help children learn “proper (as defined by the society) ways of acting in a culture” (Zastrow & Bowker, 1984, p. 25). However, there also may be distinct differences in the socialization processes among members belonging to the same ethnic or cultural group and hence the variation in child-rearing practices. For example, cultural orientations of Chinese immigrants are a good example of the effects of social and environmental differences on human behavior (Fong & Wu, 1996). Fong (1990) states that Chinese immigrants from the Republic of China after the introduction of single-child policy in 1979 may exhibit different kinds of dynamics in raising the only child. Fong & Wu (1996) affirm that “the single-child policy has had a dramatic effect on the socialization of children...Single children today are the focal point of two parents and four grandparents, who tend to focus on the child” (p. 75). In this case, there is the likelihood of “spoiling” the child (Fong, 1990), whereas Chinese immigrants arriving from Hong Kong and Taiwan are not influenced by the restrictive policy in the Republic of China. Hence, despite observing the commonalities among Chinese women regarding their child-rearing practices, it is important to acknowledge that homogeneity is not the norm.

A study by Gupta & Gupta (1985) sheds light on the influences of American culture on the child-rearing practices of Indian immigrant mothers living in the United States. For this study, the researcher had selected 70 Indian and 60 American mothers with at least one child aged 12 or younger from mid-western states of the United States. All mothers in this study had completed high school diploma and most had at least some

post-secondary education. The length of time East Indian mothers were in the States was not identified. Data was collected using Nebraska Parent Attitude Scale (NPAS) which measures three attitudinal categories: democratic, dominant, and disinterested. No significant differences were found between Indian and American mothers in their child-rearing practices for any of the three parent-type attitudes. According to Gupta & Gupta, “the results demonstrate that American culture influences Indian mothers so as to change their parenting attitudes towards being more liberal” (p. 103). It is important to keep in mind that the sample for this study was homogeneous when one considers the educational levels of the mothers in the study. However, this is an important finding for health care professionals to be cognizant of dominant and variant cultural orientations within the cultural groups, otherwise, there is a risk of cultural stereotyping. The results of this study also confirm that the cultural practices are not immutable.

From the review of selected literature, it is evident that new immigrants face multiple issues in the early period of adjustment to the new country. Their child-rearing practices are put to test and are viewed using the expectations of the dominant cultural group child-rearing practices. It is important to realize that cultures practices are not static. The parents make a great effort to integrate the new codes of social conduct with their own cultural values and beliefs in order to be effective in raising their children in the new country. The process of integration is gradual and calls for an understanding from those involved in helping new immigrants to retain the beliefs, values, and practices of their culture and, at the same time, adapt to the new practices of the new country. A challenge indeed but achievable. In the process, an enriched population emerges because of its ability to embrace diverse ways of addressing human phenomena.

Research Design

The descriptive qualitative method presented by Schatzman and Strauss (1973) was used for this study wherein the strategies designed to collect and analyze data from the field is the primary concern. The underlying principle is that “the researcher must get close to the people whom he studies” (p. 5). This approach stresses the use of any modus operandi to acquire the desired information and to emphasize certain ways of thinking about the data collected. The researcher can be creative and flexible in determining the techniques and strategies used to collect and analyze data. Schatzman and Strauss maintain that “in field research, a refashioning of design must go on through most of the work” (p. 7) and describe the researcher who uses this approach as follows:

...the field researcher is a methodological pragmatist. He sees any method of inquiry as a system of strategies and operations designed—at any time—for getting answers to certain questions about events which interest him.
(p. 7)

Sample

A convenience sample for the study was recruited through Services for Healthy Living, the Calgary Regional Health Authority, the Calgary Immigrant Aid Society, and personal contacts. To ensure that each prospective participant acquired the requisite information prior to her involvement in the study, individuals were contacted by a member of the research team. After initial agreement was obtained, a research assistant began the data collection process (Appendix A).

Method

Data was gathered via a demographic questionnaire and an informal, face-to-face interview using semi-structured questions (Appendix B). Most of the participants required the assistance of an interpreter due to language barriers. The duration of an

interview was approximately one hour. The informal interview provided the freedom to follow-up on any facets of concern that arose and resulted in enriched data. Interviews were audio taped and transcribed verbatim.

Data Analysis

Inductive data analysis was utilized to examine the data. Lincoln and Guba (1985) define inductive data analysis as “a process for making sense of field data” (p. 265). In describing the process, Patton (1980) states that “inductive analysis means that patterns, themes, and categories of analysis come from the data. They emerge out of the data rather than being imposed on them prior to data collection and analysis” (p. 303).

Each member of the research team reviewed the interview transcripts to identify patterns and themes that were common and themes that differed for each cultural group. A series of meetings were held to discuss the results of the individual data analysis and to reach consensus on the significant topics. The next step was to identify examples of rich data to support the salient themes.

Findings

The focus of the research was to determine the factors that influenced the child-rearing practices of recently immigrated Chinese and East Indian women with children aged 0 to 6. As the majority of literature in this field of study is American based, the information will not only contribute to the existing literature on child-rearing practices but also will enhance Canadian data. Human service professionals, especially nurses, may increase their understanding of factors that influence child-rearing practices and the practices of Chinese and East Indian women.

Demographic Profile

This section of the report includes an examination of the common themes that surfaced from the data in relation to the primary research question.

Twelve Chinese women from Mainland China, Hong Kong, and Taiwan, and 8 women from the Indian continent comprised the sample group of 20. The average age of the participants was 32, however, the Chinese women were older on average (34.5 years of age) than the women from the Indian continent (28.0 years of age).

The average age of the male partners of the study participants was 35. On average, the Chinese men were 37 years and the men from the Indian content 32 years.

All respondents possessed a minimum of high school while 75 percent had a post-secondary education. At the time of the interviews, approximately 54 percent were employed.

The husbands of the participants had completed high school, and 65 percent achieved a post-secondary education. Sixty-five percent were employed.

The average length of residence in Canada was 19 months, of which the women from China averaged 16 months, and the average for the women from the Indian continent was 23 months.

For the men, the average length of residence was 40 months. The Chinese men averaged 24 months and the East Indian men 72 months.

Of the twelve men who reported their purpose for migrating to Canada, the most frequently cited reasons were to seek a better life in Canada, to look for employment opportunities, and to continue their studies.

Emerged Themes

Parental Vision

The aspirations parents held for their children was a predominant theme and reflected the qualities the women hoped their children would achieve, including (a) respecting elders, (b) ensuring they were well educated, (c) helping children understand the difference between acceptable and inappropriate behavior, and (d) articulating the role of mothers in the development of their children.

Respect for Elders. Both the East Indian and Chinese participants felt respect for elders was an important attribute for children.

And in China there is a very old tradition where the older looks after the younger one and the younger one respects the older. (Chinese)

They believe that he (the child) should respect the elders. (East Indian)

Both groups stressed that instilling respect for elders should commence at a young age.

Valuable/Well-Rounded Person. Respondents emphasized a desire for their children to be valuable, well-rounded individuals.

We want the child to be good at everything. (Chinese)

And we wish they grow up into a complete person. (East Indian)

Well Educated. Not surprisingly, the majority of responses stressed the importance and value of education.

My aim is to give him a proper education and you know a good education is needed so that he can be a professional. (Chinese)

And if she does not do well at school she could not go to university. And if she doesn't go to university, she could not get a better job. (East Indian)

Helping Children Understand Appropriate and Unacceptable Behavior. The mothers maintained that it was very vital to teach children what is appropriate and unacceptable behavior. In their opinion, this is an important aspect in attempting to ensure that children become "good people."

She (the respondent) believes in teaching her daughter right from wrong...and what is acceptable and what is not acceptable. (East Indian responding through an interpreter)

I think if you are raising children it is important to let them know what are the good things and what are the bad things...They have to learn more about how to become good people. (Chinese)

Parental Responsibility. The mothers were consistent in their belief that in order to help children acquire the desired attributes, parents are responsible for providing the proper guidance and direction for their children .

But the parent has the responsibility [for the proper upbringing of their children]. (Chinese)

My only hope is that they grow up to be good human beings and be accepted into society and that a mother's upbringing and guidance is important. (East Indian)

Personal Influences. Personal experiences and ideas were also factors influencing their child-rearing practices

Sometimes my experience in the world influences me. (Chinese)

My own thinking...it is my own thinking that a child raised with love and affection will grow up to be a good person. (East Indian)

Not surprisingly, the individuals most influential in relation to the child-rearing practices of the participants were their parents:

My parents influenced me in a positive way. (East Indian)

Actually, my parents and their practices. (Chinese)

Actualizing the Parental Vision

Respondents from both groups indicated that they attempt to ensure that the expectations and visions for their children become reality by practicing the following: (a) spending time with them; (b) role modeling; (c) investing financially in the children; and (d) discussing child raising with family, friends, and others.

Spending Time. Spending time with their children surfaced as a major priority as the mothers believed they would be in a position to positively influence their children.

I spend time every week with my children. (Chinese)

It is important that a child gets complete attention from her mother. (East Indian)

In [mainland] China, they only allow one child per family, hence the major focus in life is the child. (Chinese)

As just 54 percent of these women reported that they were employed, it appears that some may have more time to spend with their children.

Role Modeling. The responses showed that the parents of the women served as role models and teachers and that they used similar strategies when raising their own children.

They [parents] taught me through storytelling and setting examples.” (East Indian)

Another interviewee remarked, “watching them [parents] how they conducted their lives.” (East Indian)

Our parents taught us to be good people...so that is why now we have to set good examples for our children...we have to be good ourselves in order to influence our children. (Chinese)

When my mother was raising us, she gave us lots of love and attention. (Chinese)

Investing in Their Children. To provide for their children and to invest in their academic development and opportunities, the mothers stressed the need for financial resources.

Financially, we have to work hard to give them an education. (East Indian)

We spend a lot of time and money investing in books for her because she loves to read and write. (Chinese)

Discussions with Family, Friends, and Others. Based on the responses, it appears that the women attempt to enhance their knowledge on how to parent through discussions with family members, friends, and other individuals.

In China, in the office my office mates discuss with each other how to raise children. (Chinese)

Influence of Canadian Society

Three features of Canadian society were noted which, in their view, did impact or could influence their child rearing practices: (a) the perception of more freedom for children in Canada, (b) different styles of disciplining children, and (c) child welfare.

Greater Freedom for Canadian Children. Throughout the interview process, the perception that Canadian children possess more freedom appeared to be a very common theme.

I find children here are more liberated, more free when it comes to teenagers...Chinese teenagers listen to their parents more, they are more obedient...and if a parent says they cannot go out then they will not go out...But here...children are so free that it worries me, especially in terms of sex. (Chinese)

According to Canadian society, when a child is 18 years old...parents don't tend to control a kid when he or she has reached 18 years old. He or she is free to go whenever they want. (East Indian)

Different Styles of Disciplining Children

Respondents from both groups stressed the differences in disciplining children from their countries of origin in comparison to Canada. Women voiced that there is a lack of discipline in Canadian society.

Kids are not as controlled here. I mean they are not restricted here at all. (East Indian)

For example, in China, some of the parents hit children. In Canada, never. (Chinese)

Canadian children do not obey their parents. They have their own mind. (Chinese)

An environment where the women noticed a lack of discipline was in the schools.

In terms of discipline, for example, if my children were doing something wrong, I would still spank them. Because I believe that when children are badly behaving, they need to be disciplined and that they need to be

spanked. And when they get spanked they will remember what they did wrong. (Chinese)

In Hong Kong, the school is more disciplined. The teacher will teach the kids this is right and this is wrong. (Chinese)

Existence of the Child Welfare System. The presence of the child welfare system and the protection and rights of children was cited as another aspect of Canadian society that impacts both positively and negatively on the child-rearing practices of the women.

The law protects children like protecting the children's rights. These are very strong. So I find in Canada the law of protecting the children is a bit too much. (Chinese)

If you see a child going out of control, you have somebody to help you. You have places like Child Welfare to help you. (East Indian)

When they grow up, they realize that the law protects them so they choose not to listen to the parents. (Chinese)

The law plays a great part in the upbringing of the kids and making sure they the kids are safe. (East Indian)

Challenges To Raising Children in Canadian Society

Language barriers, financial stability, housing, and employment are some of the challenges associated with raising children in Canadian Society.

Language Barrier

Consistent with studies documenting the experiences of immigrants and refugees in Canada (Beiser, et al., 1988), the women reported that language barriers served not only as a factor in raising children in Canada, but that it is also a challenge encountered by the parents and/or other relatives of the children.

And another thing is the language barrier...because I cannot speak English very well so that is why it is hard to communicate with teachers in the school. (Chinese)

Actually, the main problem in our family is that my in-laws do not speak English. (East Indian)

Financial

The women cited having sufficient monetary resources as another challenge:

We [the parents] cannot afford to send the baby to day care. (East Indian)

Sometimes it is difficult in terms of providing material things; for example, she has a great interest in music. (Chinese)

Employment.

The women recognized the challenges associated with finding employment as a newcomer.

Because when you immigrate, it is more difficult to find a job. (Chinese)

To find a job is the biggest problem for him [husband] at the moment. (East Indian)

Housing

Acquiring housing where children were accepted or that was suitable for children represented the fourth challenge for the women.

In terms of housing, sometimes I find it difficult because a lot of places do not take kids. (Chinese)

There are many big high rise buildings which are not meant for the children. They [the landlords] say no as these buildings are not for children. (East Indian)

Other Factors

Religion. Religion surfaced as a factor that influenced child-rearing practices for the East Indian participants.

Because we are Muslim, it is essential for us to speak the truth. Hence, we want to raise honest kids.

My direction in raising my children is through my religion Islam.

As far as my religion is concerned, I take up the good things.

Future Concerns. With their children ranging in age from 0 to 6, the women were asked if they had any future concerns in regard to raising their children in Canada.

When he goes to school, that is when he will learn certain things from his friends, from his peers, and then things will change. (East Indian)

There will be some change in the future because of the way Canadian society is treating children here. They give children a lot of freedom and they protect children from more than they should...When they are teenagers they definitely need more surveillance from their parents. (Chinese)

There would be some conflicts in the future that I can see because he is now being raised in a different culture than I was and so he would have different beliefs than I do and he would have different opinions. (Chinese)

Experience with the Health Care System

This study was conducted as a result of discussions with the group of public health nurses who were uncertain if the services provided to clients from diverse cultural backgrounds were indeed helpful. Study participants were asked to provide feedback on their experience with the Canadian health care system. The majority of remarks offered were made in reference to the interaction with the public health nurse and were extremely positive:

I am getting help from the public health nurse. She has been calling me and has come to my house three times (East Indian)

I find raising a child here very easy because everything is available here...When I had my baby in the hospital, I did not speak English so they referred me to a doctor who speaks mandarin (Chinese).

Discussion

With the increasing diversity of Canada's population, it is imperative that human service professionals such as nurses and social workers ensure that the services provided are culturally appropriate and responsive to their unique needs. In order to provide these services, it is important for these professionals to not only possess the necessary skills but also to have an understanding of the issues that confront them individually and as members of a specific cultural community.

Service providers require knowledge on the settlement and adaptation processes experienced by new immigrants and refugees as well as the salient values, norms, beliefs, and behaviours such as the roles and expectations of family members. It is equally important to comprehend what prompted their migration to Canada.

There are two major challenges faced by immigrant and refugee parents who originate from countries where the culture is significantly different from Canada. For the women who participated in the study, determining which aspects of their culture they would retain and which aspects they would incorporate from Canadian society in raising their children was difficult. Concern was also consistently expressed about the impact Canadian culture would have on their children as they reached adolescence. The women speculated that intergenerational conflict would become an issue due largely to the influence of their Canadian peers, however, they did feel they were in a position to instill the values they deemed important because of the young age of their children. It was their hope that this would mitigate some of the practices of Canadian society unacceptable to their cultural orientations.

Other issues of which human service professionals must be aware and which may impact the child-rearing practices of immigrants and refugees are changes in employment status, role reversal among family members, and the loss of a social support network, especially the extended family.

The aspirations of Chinese and East Indian mothers were not unique and likely conform to parents of all cultural groups in Canadian society, i.e., respecting elders, developing into well-rounded individuals, understanding appropriate behaviour, and obtaining a good education, however, how it is accomplished differs from the aspirations of the dominant cultural group.

Implications for Human Service Professionals

In their interactions with clients, it is equally important for human service professionals to learn about diverse cultural and ethnic communities as it is to become knowledgeable about individual clients. This could be achieved by asking questions and observing behaviours. In this context, professionals should adopt the position of active learners, which may lead to the use of more appropriate and effective interventions.

Closely related is the need to incorporate a process that allows clients to provide feedback on the usefulness of the services provided by human service personnel. Incorporating such a process may result in the identification of (1) opportunities to provide improved services, (2) issues that hinder the adjustment process for immigrants and refugees, and (3) strengths within the client or his/her family that may ease the settlement process. Finally, by working with newcomers and establishing trusting relationships, service providers may discover that they are indeed contributing positively

to the settlement and adaptation of immigrant and refugees. This should be the ultimate goal of all human service practitioners.

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Products From Study

Refereed Journal Article

Sethi, S., Este, D., & Charlebois, M. (2000). Factors influencing the child-rearing practices of recently migrated Chinese and East Indian women with children from infancy to age six. Hong Kong Nursing Journal (submitted).

Conference Presentations

Este, D., Sethi, S., & Charlebois, M. (1999, June). Factors influencing the child-rearing practices of recently migrated Chinese and East Indian women with children from infancy to age six. Paper presented at the Annual l'association pour la recherche interculturelle: International Conference, Université Parix-Nanterre, Paris-Nanterre by Dr. J. Frideres and Dr. Y. Herbert, University of Calgary.

Sethi, S., Este, D., & Charlebois, M. (1999, June). Factors influencing the child-rearing practices of recently migrated Chinese and East Indian women with children from infancy to age six. Paper presented at the International Transcultural Nursing Conference, Hong Kong.

Este, D., Sethi, S., & Charlebois, M. (1999, June). Factors influencing the child-rearing practices of recently migrated Chinese and East Indian women with children from infancy to age six. Paper presented at the Children, Families, and Communities 1999 Conference, Prince George, BC.

Este, D., Sethi, S., & Charlebois, M. (1998, October). Factors influencing the child-rearing practices of recently migrated Chinese and East Indian women with children from infancy to age six. Presented at the Bridging the Gap: Research, Policy and Services Perspectives on the Metropolis Project, Annual Workshop/Conference, Prairie Centre for Excellence on Immigration and Integration Research, Regina, SK.

Este, D., Sethi, S., & Charlebois, M. (1998, July). Factors influencing the child-rearing practices of recently migrated Chinese and East Indian women with children from infancy to age six. International Child Care Conference, Edmonton, AB.

Este, D., Sethi, S., & Charlebois, M. (1998, March). Factors influencing the child-rearing practices of recently migrated Chinese and East Indian women with children from infancy to age six. Calgary Node, Workshop/Conference, Prairie Centre for Excellence on Immigration and Integration Research, Calgary, AB.

Future Conference Presentations

Este, D., Sethi, S., & Charlebois, M. (2000, February). Factors influencing the child-rearing practices of recently migrated Chinese and East Indian women with children from

infancy to age six. Abstract submitted to Women's Status: Vision and Reality – Bridging East and West, International Conference, New Dehli, India.

Este, D., Sethi, S., & Charlebois, M. (2000, February). Factors influencing the child-rearing practices of recently migrated Chinese and East Indian women with children from infancy to age six. Abstract submitted to Qualitative Health Research Conference, Banff, AB.

Appendix A

Consent Form

- Project Title:** Factoring influencing child-rearing practices of recently migrated East Indian and Chinese women with children from infancy to age six
- Investigators:** David Este, DSW; Sarla Sethi, R.N., PhD (Nursing); and Maya Charlebois, R.N., MN
- Funding Agency:** Prairie Centre for Excellence for Research on Immigration and Integration

This consent form, a copy of which has been given to you, is only a part of the process of informed consent. It should give you the basic idea of what the research is about and what your participation will involve. If you would like more detail about something mentioned here, of information not included here, please ask. Please take the time to read this form carefully and to understand any accompanying information.

You are being asked to participate in a research study that will explore child-rearing practices of recently migrated East Indian and Chinese women with children from infancy to age six.

If you agree to participate in this study, your involvement will include the following:

1. You will be interviewed by one of the investigators or their research assistant on one occasion.
2. The interview will be arranged at your convenience and in a setting of your choice.
3. The maximum length of the interview will be one and a half hour.
4. Interview will be conducted using both semi-structured and informal interview format.
5. To be sure that your words are captured accurately the interview will be audio-taped.
6. The audio-taped interview will be transcribed for the purposes of analysis of the information you provided. Your name will not appear on the typed interviews. The typed interviewed will be assigned a code number and kept under lock and key in one of the co-investigators' offices (Sarala Sethi or Dave Este) at the University of Calgary. All the data (audio-taped and transcribed) will be shredded one year after the completion of the study.

7. The Child Welfare Act (1984), Government of the Province of Alberta, Canada, dictates that any situation that places a child at risk must be reported to the appropriate authority. You can be rest assured that every effort will be made to maintain confidentiality unless a situation is such that interviewer is require to report.
8. There are no benefits to you by being in this study. Also, this study will be done at no cost to you.
9. After the completion of the study, the investigators will be very happy to share the findings of the study with you.
10. The results of this will be used in teaching, presentations and in publications of the study.

Your signature on this form indicates that you have understood to your satisfaction the information regarding participation in the research project and agree to participate as a subject. In no way does this waive your legal rights or release the investigators, sponsors, or involved institutions from their legal ad professional responsibilities. You are free to withdraw from the study at any time. Your continued participation should be as informed as your initial consent, so you should feel free to ask for clarification or new information throughout your participation. If you have further questions concerns matters related to research, please contact one or all of the following co-investigators:

Dr. Dave Este at (403) 220-7309

Dr. Sarla Sethi at (403) 220-4641

Ms. Maya Charlebois (403) 248-8868

If you have questions concerning your participation in this project, you may also contact the Office of the Vice-President (Research) and ask for Karen McDermid, 220-3381.

Participant

Date

Investigator/Witness (optional)

Date

A copy of this consent form has been given to you to keep for your records or reference.

Appendix B

Semi-Structured Interview Questions

1. What are your beliefs and values regarding raising your children?
2. Who or what has influenced you in the formation of your beliefs and values regarding raising your children?
3. How have they influenced you?
4. What other factors have influenced you in your child-rearing practices?
5. Are you able to adhere to your beliefs and values while raising your children in the Canadian society?
6. In what ways have you been influenced by the culture of the Canadian society in raising your children?
7. Please describe any difficulties/conflicts you may be experiencing in making adjustments in your child-rearing practices.
8. Please describe any other concerns you may have encountered while raising your children in the Canadian society. (Social support, financial status, housing, etc.)
9. What are some of the ways you resolve these concerns/difficulties/conflicts?
10. What are some of the ways health care professionals (nurses, social workers, physicians, psychologists) have assisted you in raising your children?
11. How can health care professionals be of assistance to you in the raising of your children in the Canadian society?

DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

Interviewer _____ Date of Interview _____

Name _____

Address _____

_____ Postal Code _____

Telephone No. _____

Age _____ Religion _____ Education _____

Occupation _____ Employment Status _____

Number of Children (M) _____ (F) _____

Ages of Children (M) _____ (F) _____

No. of Months in Canada _____ Country of Origin _____

Reasons for Migrating to Canada _____

Husband's Name _____ Age _____ Religion _____

Education _____ Occupation _____ Employment Status _____

No. of Months in Canada _____

Country of Origin _____

Reasons for Migrating to Canada _____

Who Resides in Your Household _____