

Cultural Issues in Early Childhood: Challenges for Paediatricians



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Why bother about Culture?

- **Migration: universal phenomenon**
- **Dynamic multicultural societies in major cities in western world**
- **Globalisation: traditional boundaries between people and societies shrinking**
 - **Rapid social change**
 - **Positive and negative results**
 - **Differential effects on the poor**

Culture

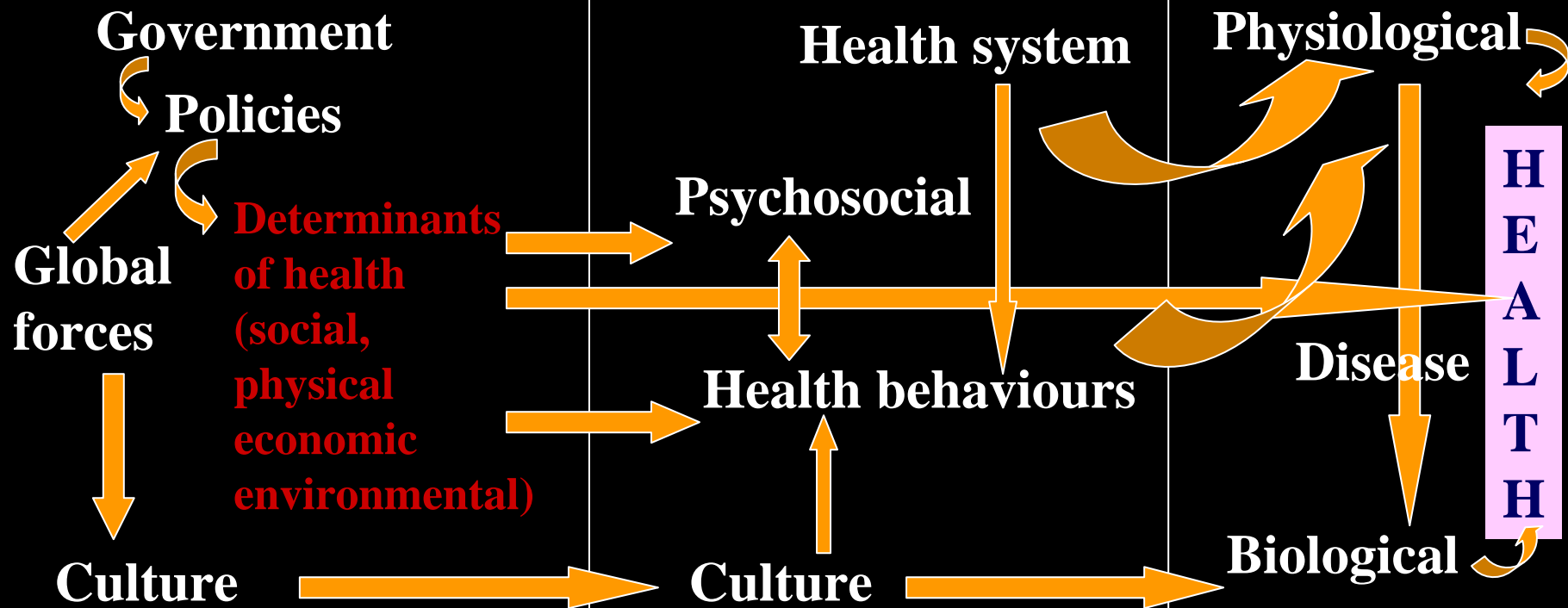
A way of life; the blueprint for living which guides thoughts, feelings and actions, and which assists individuals to identify with others who share a similar way of life.

Determinants of Health

Upstream Factors

Midstream Factors

Downstream



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Culture as a determinant of health

- **Case examples**
 - **Skin**
 - **Child maltreatment**
 - **Child rearing**

Congenital





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Cultural practices

- **Coining, cupping**
- **Moxibustion**
- **Henna (allergic contact dermatitis)**
- **Cultural remedies for umbilical stump (salt, lime juice, cowdung, ash etc)**

Cao Gio – hot coin rubbing



Henna



Iodine gridding

Common in Russia and Ukraine



Unexplained ?maltreatment





UNCRC – Article 24

Parties shall take all effective and appropriate measures to abolish traditional practices prejudicial to the health of children

Cultural Issues in Child Rearing and Child Development

It is known that childrearing practices influence the rate and expression of children's development

Cultural differences in Parental Goals

- **Pedagogic:** major goals are for children to learn to feel emotionally independent from their parents and to develop interactive and language skills
- **Child-centred:** a model in which the most important goal is protecting the health and survival of the infant

Hallmark study: Le Vine et al 1994, *Child care and culture: Lessons from Africa*.

Pedagogic Model



Child-Centred Model



Pedagogic versus Child-Centred

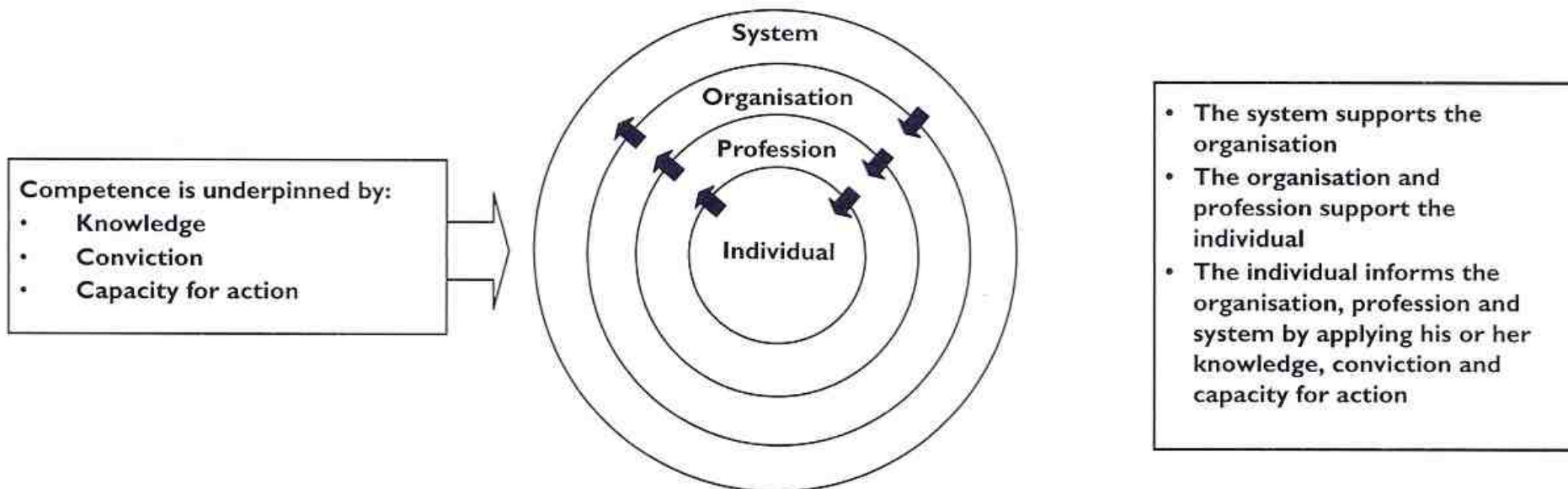
- **lack of co-sleeping**
- **relatively tolerant of other separations**
- **↑ emphasis on verbal interaction,**
- **↓ emphasis on physical contact**
- **co-sleeping and breastfeeding on demand**
- **respond rapidly to crying**
- **↑ physical contact**
- **↓ verbal interaction**

Continuum of cultural practices

Koramoā 2002

Practice	Response	Example
Beneficial	promote	Breast feeding Showing respect
Neutral	respect	Threaded beads
Potentially harmful	educate	Inner cleansing Circumcision
Harmful	prevent	Chilli in vagina Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

The Model - cultural competency



Source: *Research and consultation report commissioned for this project (see Appendix B)*

Organizational/professional level

- **Cultural competency valued, integral to core business, supported and evaluated**
- **Skills and resources to support diverse clients are in place**
- **Management committed to diversity management & training**

Individual Level

- **Develop optimum knowledge, attitudes, behaviours re cultural competency**
- **Able to work with diverse communities**
- **Develop relevant, appropriate, sustainable interventions**

Conclusions

- **Acknowledge culture in context**
- **Acknowledge social determinants**
- **Develop culturally competent practice that respects cultural/ biological variations in**
 - **family/community**
 - **parenting/child rearing**
 - **child development and behaviour**

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