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Date:  
Subject: - 1. Pregnancy  
- 2. Experience as a Midwife  
- 3. Dislocated joints - cuts  
- 4. Pains in labour  
- 5. Preparing to go camping (NUNAQPA)

T. What used to be uncomfortable was to be carrying a baby on the back, while pregnant and trying to go through the small opening of the igloo to get outside or inside.

M. When the baby was big inside?

T. Yes.

M. What did you do when you first became pregnant? You found out you were pregnant and you didn't really know what to do. How did you cope with that?

T. My first pregnancy?

M. Yes.

T. I don't really know. I had to go out to fresh air. Even when you had a nap and you woke up, you had to go out.

M. Really?

T. Also before going to bed, I had to go out for a breath of fresh air. When you went to sleep by accident, and before you went to bed, you had to go out first.

M. Really.

T. That's how it was with me.

M. You didn't have to go back in until you passed the door first?

T. Yes.

M. You had to pass through the door first?

T. Yes. If you went visiting and you found out at the door that there was no one home, you still had to go all the way in before you went back out again.

M. Really?

T. You had to go through the door all the way, that is how it was.

M. Really? You were the one with the baby go the baby would do exactly like you, it that how it was?

T. The reason I believe is for the baby to come out the first time around, when it's trying to come out during labour. There are some babies who will go back into the womb when the mother is in labour, so we had to pass all the way out so the baby would come out all the way. That's how it used to be.

M. I know. Also you would move the baby around inside you? You did that a lot?

T. Yes. We had to move the baby while in contraction.

M. You couldn't tan skins by stepping on it?

T. Yes, that's true. I was placed in that position the first time.

M. When did you become a midwife?

T. I don't exactly know. A long time ago. It was the time Hanna's wife was going to be born. That was the first time I delivered a baby.

M. Yes?

T. yes. I was there constantly by her side and I did the whole procedure. Since then I've been delivering babies.

M. Really?

T. Yes.

M. And you learned?

T. I know better now. We were all Inuit then. But I can deliver a baby alone now.

M. Is it exciting to be able to deliver babies?

T. Yes. It's fun. It does not matter how long the woman is in labour. It's just fun and good. That is how I became and I wouldn't mind if it was more than a day.

M. Really? You also know how long the delivery would be?

T. Yes. It is possible to determine yes. That's how it is.

M. You prepared the place for the mother to deliver in, of

course?

T. Yes. We do that when there are no nurses attending and you know what to do. We use a different method now, it seems like spur of the moment.

M. Was it so the delivery could be faster, that preparations were important?

T. Yes. You didn't prepare in the way the woman in labour was comfortable.

M. Not in the way she was comfortable?

T. That's true. One of the main reasons why you had to be place in the uncomfortable position is that you couldn't have your spine in a non level position. So a woman would be in a position where it was most painful so the baby would come out faster.

M. You've been in deliveries where the placenta could come out or the baby had a difficult time coming?

T. Yes. I've helped when a difficulty occurred, more than once.

M. What was wrong?

T. When the placenta has to be peeled off the upper part of the womb.

M. Yes? Is the womb sort of divided into two?

T. Yes. That is where the placenta is usually situated. It is difficult when the placenta is stuck. Difficult getting it out. You use every ounce of strength to remove the placenta when it is stuck in there.

M. Really? You can't just take it to remove it?

T. Yes. You have to try to do it the proper way so you cannot just take it and get it out.

M. The mother does whatever she is told of course?

T. Yes. When you're trying to remove the placenta, you have to do it properly in the right way. That's how it was.

M. Say anything that you know, or give some instructions.

T. In the old days, it was easier to remove the placenta if the mother was in an upright position. It was more uncomfortable for me to remove a placenta from woman who was lying down. So it was done in an upright position.

M. Really? Was your mother an expert in delivering babies?

T. I think so. I don't recall. I have heard that she was.

M. Have there ever been incidents when there was no water, you know the water that is situated on the crown of the baby's head?

T. Yes. When the water had burst during the pregnancy and that prolongs the labour, it is easier if the water bursts right before the head comes out. It was more difficult on the mother if the water had burst in the course of the pregnancy.

M. Does it still happen today?

T. Yes, it still happens.

M. Being in labour hasn't changed over the years I guess.

T. Yes. Today though, a woman in labour will be told to stop pushing, that causes for the channel through which the baby is going to come out, to be not as slippery as it should be and then the labour will go on longer.

M. Really. When you keep the baby from coming out?

T. Yes. You can assist in getting the head out by pulling gently from the sides of the baby's head. That does not cause any harm to the baby.

M. Really?

T. You put your hand inside to the side of the head and help it out, that is not dangerous to the baby.

M. The baby does not breathe right away after it is born?

T. Yes. I think that is caused by mucous in the throat. That is what I think it is.

M. Really?

T. It is when every thing is removed from the mouth that the baby start breathing.

M. You'd suck out whatever is in the mouth?

T. Yes, suck it out. It is difficult sometimes when there is mucous deep inside the baby.

M. Do you know of any boys changing to girls when they're just born?

T. Yes. Used to.

M. Some were born as boys, but turned to girls?

T. Yes. I have actually witnessed a little baby being a boy for a little while and later turning into a girl.

M. Really? When they're newly born?

T. Yes. When that happens a baby has difficulty urinating. That is what I have heard.

M. Yes?

T. Yes.

M. I have had babies. It seems I don't to know anything while I am asking these questions, I'm interviewing you, that is why.

T. I know.

M. There are things I don't know. I've never been a midwife. You have been in attendance when a woman delivered in an upright position?

T. Yes.

M. Are those who kneel while in labour, positioned upright?

T. Yes. You're not supposed to be bent forward. You sort of have to arch your back. It is uncomfortable though.

M. Really.

T. Yes. NALLIQSII<sup>1</sup>If you start labour at a certain hour of the day.

M. (The baby comes out the same hour you started feeling the pain?

T. Yes. The labour is not false but it is long so it was called NALLIQSII.

M. Really?

T. It was not false labour.

M. Have you ever assisted in bursting the water?

T. Yes. I have done that.

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1.NALLIQSII: When labour pains really started but took time.

M. With your hands?

T. Yes, they burst.

M. Is the baby always positioned with the head inside the pelvis?

T. No. It is not that often but there are breeches.

M. Really?

T. There are some breeches, yes. It is not that often though.

M. Really.

T. It looks weird when you witness it for the first time.

M. No wonder.

T. The feet showing first.

M. Yes. That is how it is, when come cases the baby is like upside down?

T. Yes. I've only seen that once.

M. Yes? This was when there were only Inuit?

T. Yes. They're difficult to attend to. Once amongst Inuit and once when there were nurses. We assisted in taking out the baby. We actually took out the baby, it was dead.

M. How did you do that?

T. By pulling it. I felt then that we had to force it out, cause we had to pull it.

M. Really.

T. When the mother would push, we'd pull and that is how it came out.

M. Because it came out feet first?

T. Yes.

M. It seems to be exciting to able to deliver a baby, that time it was anyway.

T. That's true. It is very exciting. Now, I still find it exiting, but now when a woman fails to deliver right away, they're always sent out, and it's not that good. When we know that the baby will come.

M. That's true. No wonder. When the baby is out and the placenta too, the pain never seemed to exist.

T. Yes. When you haven't had that many babies.

M. You can say anything else you know about pregnancies, if I failed to ask you anything that's of importance.

T. We were never idle really when we were pregnant. As long as we knew the baby was going to be all right. We would work constantly. We could even carry heavy loads. That's not how it is now.

M. A mother had to bleed, not that much, but had to bleed a certain amount of blood?

T. Yes, lack of bleeding causes complications later.

M. Yes.

T. \*They start being in pain after awhile. I think that is how it always is.

M. When you have clots inside you, it is very painful?

T. Yes. When they're in there and they should be, yes, it is very painful, now though, women are made to bleed so that rarely happens now.

M. Yes.

T. You usually massage your tummy in order for the clots to break up and come out.

M. I was told to move my tummy from side to side. Why is that?

T. So nothing in there would be stuck to the wall of the womb.

M. I mean after the baby was born.

T. Really?

M. I don't quite understand that.

T. That's true. You were told to keep your legs together and not have them open. This I think was done so flesh would not get caught between the pelvic bones.

M. Really.

T. Yes, to prevent flesh from getting caught.

M. Really. Right after delivering the baby?

T. Yes. That is how it was. I have never heard anything being like that today.

M. You have to be proud of the way Inuit had their babies.

T. That's true.

M. You have to let Inuit know about these things. We have know them.

T. There is nothing to be ashamed of on the procedures of labour and pregnancy.

M. One was told not to have and eat the fat off the sinew of a caribou? Is that true?

T. Yes. That caused the placenta to be stuck to the womb. Maybe because the TUNNUQ<sup>1</sup> is stuck to the sinew.

M. Yes. Also what were pregnant women told not to do?

T. There were a few things that were against the custom. We had to follow our custom.

M. You were told not to be stressed with worry?

T. Yes. You were not supposed to have a lot on your mind.

M. It must be weird to be cutting an umbilical cord for the first time?

T. It feels hard.

M. No wonder.

T. It feels hard. It's not like that all the time but it feels hard the first time.

M. Does the cord bleed?

T. It bleeds.

M. No wonder. I have never done that myself.

T. Every since nurses have been up here, a nurse tests the see how the cord is, like you would to a hat, investigate the top and the inside.

M. Is the rough part the outside?

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1. TUNNUQ: The fat of the caribou.



T. Yes. The rough skin is outside and smooth one is inside.

M. Really.

T. That is how it is, the rough side is the outside and the smooth side is the inside.

M. Really?

T. That's why I'm comparing it to a hat.

M. It is tested to see it functioned properly or not I guess?

T. Yes. If it didn't function properly, I think part of the cord would be stuck with the other side.

M. If part of the placenta was left behind in the womb, would that cause a lot of pain to the mother?

T. I don't think they were ever really sick from that. I wonder how they worked really. A part of the placenta that was left behind usually always came out.

M. Yes. When a woman miscarries, does she feel like she's in labour?

T. Yes. It is like labour, now matter how small the baby is.

M. Really?

T. Like a full term. Not when it's out, it is not that painful. But when the miscarriage starts, it is painful.

M. You learn a lot.

T. Yes.

M. I remember when you fixed a dislocated joint. Was it dislocated?

T. Yes. It was dislocated, the disk had fallen out of it's place.

M. Like this side was bent and this looked like a knee?

T. Yes.

M. You fixed it? What did you do?

T. I tried to fix it like this, by pulling. I think joints fall back to where they were when you try to fix them right after the accident.

M. Yes.

T. When they're not that severely injured, they're easy to fix. It is almost impossible to fix dislocated hips.

M. Is that what happened to you?

T. Yes. They're very hard to handle.

M. But you have fixed one?

T. Yes. But you have to use all your strength.

M. Really.

T. It is more difficult than the rest of the body.

M. Maybe because it is lower up?

T. You get mixed up in which side the disk is at or which way to turn it.

M. What about on the arm? Is it possible to know what exactly is wrong?

T. Yes.

M. How is it you know?

T. the disk fall either forward or backwards.

M. You use the kneeling or pulling technique for this. Which one?

T. If the arm has fallen downwards, the kneeling technique is used. And for those with a leg that has bent backwards, you push the leg from behind forwards. You do this quickly.

M. Wow! You're used this now I guess?

T. Not that much but I don't faint.

M. For some who have dislocations, they are some times left in that position for long periods of time?

T. Yes. And the swelling starts, and when they swell, it is very difficult to fix them properly.

M. If something had been done, it would have been fixed?

T. Yes. We try to determine what position it is in first. It is possible to try and do something about things. As long as they're not too complicated. It is very difficult in some cases.

M. No wonder. The bone is not in it's right place, no wonder it's difficult.

T. I have had problems with my husbands arm when it goes in front on to the chest area and I have a difficult time putting it back on the socket?

M. You mean this?

T. Yes. It goes onto the chest and it gets hard to put back. Sometimes I loose all hope but I manage to put it back into the socket.

M. It must be very painful.

T. It is very difficult in some cases, yes.

M. Do you lick cuts? If someone cut himself and it bleeds a lot, do you lick it?

T. Yes. It is possible to stop the bleeding like that.

M. You lick it? With your tongue and it stops bleeding?

T. Yes. I wonder why the bleeding stops.

M. Really, eh? I wonder why. Maybe when there was no medication that time that was the only way?

T. Maybe.

M. How would you bandage it, when the nurses were not around to do that?

T. For a big cut, you shut the wound by pressing on it together and winding some thread around it and if there's anything to bandage it with you bandage it. That way the healing starts.

M. Really?

T. Yes. That is what you do.

M. Before, there were no bandages. But they didn't have that many knives to cut themselves with. So cuts were not that common I guess?

T. That is possible. Maybe there were less cut wounds. I think so.

M. I hear blubber is good for wounds.

T. Yes. Square flipper blubber I hear is the best. My cousin's husband cut off his finger. I don't know which finger.

M. Who?

T. My cousin's husband.

M. Tatigat?

T. Yes.

M. Really?

T. Yes. He's pointing finger has the tip part missing. I was trying to stop the bleeding but I couldn't. What I did was sew some blubber around his finger.

M. Really?

T. Yes.

M. Did the part that came off stick back to the finger?

T. No. He had left it behind to the place where he cut himself so I didn't sew it back on. Akearok found it later and brought it in.

M. Really? The part came right off?

T. Yes. Some of the bone was not touched. I can't quite remember but the part came right off. I had a difficult time in stopping the bleeding.

M. No wonder. But you attended to it?

T. Yes. There was no one else to do it. The other woman couldn't stand the sight of blood. She tends to faint, so I had to do something about it.

M. What about people who bleed endlessly through the nose?

T. You can try to stop the bleeding, it doesn't stop right away but it eventually does.

M. Yes?

T. Yes. The bleeding does not stop right away but it does eventually stops.

M. They have to find out what you used for medicine before, so what did you use to stop the bleeding?

T. I don't know with what, I only know the methods I use.

M. Really?

T. Yes. I try and see which ones are the most effective. You bit hard around the end of the bone. Yes, I only know the methods I use. I don't know what medication or procedure was used.

M. Really?

T. Yes. I've never had education on that.

M. But uneducated people in the old days were strong. What they're trying to find out is what the people did before for illnesses even if they were not educated.

T. Really?

M. Yes.

T. Herb found on the ground were used for cuts.

M. Were they used to apply on the cut or used as bandages?

T. They applied it on the cut and bandaged it afterwards. I think that's how it was done.

M. You used it to apply onto the cut?

T. Yes. I think that is how it was done.

M. Really?

T. Yes.

M. There's none in this area?

T. There's some but they're rare, but out there, there's plenty. You can try to find out.

M. Yes. We need to get into that stuff again.

T. There's one way to find out. Also what I want to say is some women in labour have abdominal pain. You've seen this film on lakes which look oily.

M. You mean when they're in labour?

T. Yes. I was in pain from my abdomen on my first labour. What I was told was to use that oily looking film on a lake and apply it on my abdomen. I did that and since then I've never had abdominal pain.

M. Really?

T. Yes, like in the old days.

M. Really?

T. Yes. So I would use that as a lotion to apply to my abdomen.

M. Really.

T. Like in the really old days.

M. Labour pains have never changed in feeling even up to today.

T. Yes.

M. Labour never changes.

T. Never changes.

M. Yes.

T. The only thing that has changed is the positions but labour pains never change.

M. The pains.

T. Now that white man is around all the time, the positions have changed, nothing else.

M. Really?

T. Yes.

M. Is it because a person might put the wrong thing in the mouth which might cause an illness, that when a baby's head is outside the mother, the inside of the mouth is cleaned right away?

T. I don't know. In some cases, the body follows the head. Some are not like that after the head comes out, the body doesn't follow right away.

M. Because pushing is stopped?

T. Yes. In some cases pushing might be stopped, but the body comes out right away, so the mouth is cleaned right away.

M. When you were going out camping, what time of year did you start preparing for the trip?

T. Boats were not as available that time, so we prepared while the ice was still on the sea.

M. While the ice was still there?

T. Yes. While we still could use the dog team.

M. Really?

T. Because boats were not available. When they reached the summer camp, they'd first hunt for square flipper. When the ice left, they hunt seals and start preparing for the caribou hunt. It was possible to determine when caribou skins were best for clothing and that was when eggs hatched.

M. When you'd prepare for the caribou hunt, you'd prepare the kamiks<sup>1</sup>.

T. Yes.

M. Or did you take whatever you needed to prepare the clothing?

T. Summer clothing was what they took for the summer.

M. Really? Things like ALAKSAK<sup>2</sup> and hide used for kamik soles.

T. Yes. We'd take those with us.

M. You tried taking more than one?

T. Yes. things that you could use over the summer were taken for the trip. That's how it was.

M. Were dog pack sacks prepared for the caribou hunt too?

T. Yes. Yes, everything would be prepared before the actual walk started.

M. What did they use for dog pack sacks?

T. Seal skins were made, some were made of thinned walrus hide. That's what they used.

M. Really.

T. Yes. Some did that.

M. Things you'd use like the qulliq<sup>3</sup> and blubber would be taken too?

T. Yes. We'd take square flipper for our oil to use on lamps.

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1.KAMIKS: sealskin boots.

2.ALAKSAK: hide used for soles of kamiks.

3.QUILLIQ: seal oil lamp

M. Qulliq were used not that often in the summer?

T. Yes. They were mainly used for light.

M. Really.

T. Yes.

M. You wouldn't use the lamp during the day?

T. No we wouldn't use it. We used it only when it became dark outside. When the herbs you burn were getting damp. The lamp would be used only cooking and light.

M. When the stuff you use for burning became damp and couldn't burn?

T. Yes.

M. You cooked outdoors?

T. Yes. We would prepare the seal oil lamp before it became dark.

M. You'd be out there a long time?

T. Yes. Mostly all summer until fall. Sometimes we'd start heading back when the lakes froze.

M. Really.

T. Sometimes not.

M. The elders never worried about you?

T. No they didn't. We walked all summer.

M. You's stay in one place for a short period of time?

T. Yes. That's how it was.

M. The caribou being caught would be cached?

T. Yes. We'd dry the skins at the same time and have meat cached. Sinews were never wasted. I smell the qulliq.

M. You'd take all the skins on your way back?

T. When there weren't too many, all would be taken back but if





T. Yes. We'd just walk, but we stopped to rest more often. No wonder.

M. You got used to walking.

T. The first day was tiring.

M. No wonder. Some women must have had miscarriages sometimes.

T. I guess so, but I rarely heard of such things happening.

M. Really?

T. As long as they didn't fall down. I didn't hear of that often.

M. You'd have a big tummy, with a baby on your back.

T. Yes. We'd walk like that. One never complained about being tired.

M. Like, this woman's tired, lets take a rest for today. That was never the case.

T. Your mother? Yes. Used to be tied with a belt or something. She'd be tied around the hips.

M. Really? You walked every summer?

T. Yes. We did. I started remembering when that was a custom. And we'd keep that custom every summer. Even when we moved here. Only once did I miss a summer and that's when they went to the Repulse Bay area, not too long ago.

M. Really. You didn't drink tee while you were walking in the summer?

T. We were not that way so we had tea for a long time.

M. You'd drink together?

T. Yes, not like today.

M. You'd be dressed in caribou? It must have been hot.

T. Yes it was.

M. And you'd be carrying loads on your backs?

T. Yes. We'd get ready early in the morning before the tent dried out, while it was still damp.

M. Really.

T. Cause it was easier to fold while damp and that was to prevent it for damages.

M. The tents would be carried by your fathers?

T. By the dogs.

M. By dogs.

T. Yes.

M. Your fathers carried other things?

T. Yes. Beddings, yes. And some were carried by dogs.

M. Really. the dogs would follow you faithfully?

T. Yes. Once they got used to following, yes.

M. Really.