

resorting to probing questions. They “speak the language” of the family who seeks help and often combine their rituals with the family or community spirituality. They also are able to create an atmosphere conducive to successful management. Furthermore, they exhibit a sincere interest in the family and their problems.

Some folk remedies are compatible with the medical regimen and are useful to reinforce the treatment plan. For example, aspirin (a “hot” medication) is an appropriate therapy for “cold” diseases, such as arthritis. It is common to discover that a folk prescription has a scientific basis. In any case, nurses must respect practices that do not harm patients. A folk healer may also be requested to perform certain rituals. For example, the Chicano curandero ascertains that the condition is truly the result of the evil eye by performing an assessment ritual and then performs a curative ritual. Sometimes faith in the folk practitioner delays obtaining needed medical treatment, although the practitioner usually suggests medical care if his or her efforts are unsuccessful.

Health practices of different cultures may also present problems of assessment and interpretation. For example, certain cultural practices or remedies can be mistakenly judged as evidence of child abuse by uninformed professionals (Box 2-9). It is important to keep the lines of communication open with families and approach the situation with a sense of cultural humility.

### **Box 2-9**

#### **Cultural Practices the Dominant Culture May Consider Abusive**

- **Coining:** A Vietnamese practice that may produce welt-like lesions on the child's back when the edge of a coin is repeatedly rubbed lengthwise on the oiled skin to rid the body of disease.
- **Cupping:** An Old World practice (also practiced by the Vietnamese) of placing a container (e.g., tumbler, bottle, jar) containing steam against the skin to “draw out the poison” or other evil element. When the heated air in the container cools, a vacuum is created that produces a bruise-like blemish on the skin directly beneath the mouth of the container.