

Midwifery Care of Mothers and Newborns

Fatimah Mohammed Essa Ageeli¹, Meaad Nasser Hamad Ogdi², Enas Hassan Alhazemi³, Hajar Ibrahim Ahmed Sahli⁴, Hashima Abdu Alhazmi⁵, Huda Mohammed Ibrahim Sharif⁶, Najlaa Mohammed Saleh Suliman⁷, Nujum Mohammed Ghabri⁸, Maha Hussain Abbas Hakami⁹, Areej Mohmmad Ahmad Zaila¹⁰.

Abstract

This article examines the history, function, and advantages of midwifery in contemporary healthcare. Midwifery has been integral to human history for millennia, and midwives are now acknowledged as essential members of the healthcare team. Midwives offer many services, encompassing individualized prenatal care, labor and delivery assistance, and postpartum support, frequently employing natural and non-invasive techniques to facilitate a safe and favorable birth experience. Studies indicate that employing a midwife throughout pregnancy and childbirth can result in improved results for both mother and infant, so establishing midwifery as a crucial element of contemporary healthcare.

Keywords: Midwifery, Healthcare profession, Pregnancy, Childbirth, Prenatal care, Childbirth education, Labor, Delivery support, Natural childbirth, Continuity of care, Personalized attention

I. Introduction

With origins in antiquity, midwifery is a medical specialty that has existed for centuries. The term "midwife" originates from the Old English words "mid," signifying "with," and "wif," meaning "woman," underscoring the essential role of midwives in assisting women throughout pregnancy, childbirth, and the postpartum phase. Midwives are skilled healthcare practitioners who deliver comprehensive, woman-focused care during the delivery experience. They are specialists in standard pregnancy and delivery, concentrating on facilitating the natural childbirth process while safeguarding the health and welfare of both the mother and the newborn (1).

In recent years, midwifery has garnered increasing attention as a strategy to enhance maternal and neonatal health outcomes, especially in resource-limited environments. Midwives are essential in decreasing maternal and newborn death rates by delivering proficient care throughout pregnancy, labor, and the postpartum phase. This introduction offers a concise overview of midwifery as a healthcare profession, encompassing its historical context, the role of midwives in assisting women during pregnancy and childbirth, and the significance of midwifery in enhancing maternal and neonatal health outcomes (2).

Midwifery encompasses the art and science of assisting women and their families during pregnancy, childbirth, and the postpartum phase. This ancient profession has existed for generations, and its significance in safeguarding the health and wellbeing of mothers and infants is paramount. In recent years, midwifery has garnered increased attention and acknowledgment, as a growing number of women pursue alternative and holistic methodologies for maternity care. This article examines the history of midwifery, the function of midwives in contemporary healthcare, and the advantages of employing a midwife for pregnancy and labor (3).

Midwifery has been integral to human history for millennia. In ancient civilizations like Egypt and Greece, midwives were esteemed societal figures, and their expertise was transmitted between generations. In medieval Europe, midwives were frequently linked to witchcraft and subjected to persecution and discrimination. Nevertheless, they persisted in playing a crucial role in delivering maternity care to women. In the 18th and 19th centuries, midwifery emerged as a recognized profession, leading to the establishment of midwifery colleges in numerous nations. Nonetheless, the emergence of modern medicine in the 20th century led to a reduction in the midwife's position, with medical physicians assuming predominance in maternity care (4).

Recently, there has been a resurgence of interest in midwifery, with an increasing number of women pursuing alternative and holistic methods of maternity care. Midwives are now accepted as essential members of the

healthcare team, and their contribution to fostering healthy pregnancy and delivery is highly recognized. Midwives offer many services, encompassing prenatal care, labor and delivery assistance, and postpartum care. They collaborate with women to create a tailored care plan that considers their specific requirements and preferences. Midwives offer instruction and support to women and their families throughout labor, frequently employing natural and non-invasive techniques to ensure a safe and positive birthing experience (5).

Midwifery Care for Mothers

Midwifery care for mothers encompasses a wide range of services designed to support women throughout the continuum of pregnancy, childbirth, and the postpartum period. Midwives play a pivotal role in antenatal care, ensuring that expectant mothers receive personalized and holistic support tailored to their physical, emotional, and social needs. During antenatal visits, midwives monitor the health of both mother and baby, perform routine screenings, and provide education on pregnancy-related changes, nutrition, and birth preparation. This proactive care helps identify potential risks early, facilitating timely interventions to ensure safe pregnancies (6).

During labor and delivery, midwives act as primary caregivers, offering both clinical expertise and emotional support. They guide mothers through the physiological process of childbirth, employing evidence-based techniques to manage pain and promote natural delivery when appropriate. Midwives also play a crucial role in identifying complications that may require medical intervention, working collaboratively with obstetricians to ensure the safety of both mother and baby. Their presence during childbirth fosters a sense of reassurance and empowerment, which is critical for positive birthing experiences (7).

Postnatal care is another cornerstone of midwifery services for mothers. Midwives assist with physical recovery, monitor for signs of postpartum complications, and provide guidance on emotional well-being, including support for postpartum depression. They also educate mothers on essential newborn care, breastfeeding techniques, and family planning options. This comprehensive care not only addresses immediate postpartum needs but also contributes to long-term maternal health and well-being (8).

By focusing on individualized care and building trusting relationships, midwives create an environment where mothers feel supported and confident throughout their journey into motherhood. Their approach not only improves health outcomes but also fosters a sense of community and advocacy for maternal health.

Midwifery Care for Newborns

Midwifery care for newborns is an integral part of ensuring a healthy start to life. Immediately after birth, midwives are responsible for assessing the newborn's health, addressing their physical needs, and supporting the bonding process with the mother. This begins with the Apgar score assessment, which evaluates the baby's heart rate, respiration, muscle tone, reflex response, and skin coloration within the first minutes of life. Such evaluations help determine if any immediate medical intervention is necessary (9).

Midwives are trained to provide essential neonatal care, such as ensuring the baby's airway is clear, assisting with the first breath, and maintaining the newborn's body temperature. Skin-to-skin contact is often encouraged immediately after birth, as it stabilizes the baby's heart rate, promotes breastfeeding, and strengthens the maternal-infant bond. Midwives play a critical role in initiating and supporting breastfeeding, guiding mothers on proper latching techniques, and addressing common breastfeeding challenges (10).

In the days following birth, midwives continue to monitor the newborn's development and well-being through regular check-ups. These include tracking weight gain, observing feeding patterns, and ensuring the baby is free from any infections or jaundice. Education is a significant aspect of midwifery care, as midwives guide parents on hygiene practices, safe sleeping positions, and recognizing warning signs of illness in their newborn (11). Additionally, midwives advocate for immunization schedules and help parents navigate the early stages of parenthood with confidence and knowledge. For babies born in low-resource settings or with specific health challenges, midwives are often the first line of care, providing life-saving interventions and referring to specialized healthcare when necessary (12).

By addressing both the immediate and ongoing needs of newborns, midwifery care ensures a robust foundation for healthy growth and development, empowering parents to provide the best possible care for their child. This

holistic approach underscores the vital role midwives play in neonatal health and the overall well-being of families.

Training and Skills of Midwives

The training and skills of midwives are the foundation of their ability to provide high-quality care to mothers and newborns. Midwifery education programs are designed to equip practitioners with both theoretical knowledge and practical experience in maternal and neonatal health. These programs often follow globally recognized standards, such as those established by the International Confederation of Midwives (ICM), ensuring a comprehensive approach to training. Aspiring midwives typically complete a rigorous curriculum that includes anatomy, physiology, pharmacology, and obstetric care, alongside specialized training in neonatal health, breastfeeding support, and emergency response (13).

Practical skills are developed through hands-on clinical experience in hospitals, birthing centers, and community settings. This allows midwives to gain confidence in managing labor, conducting normal deliveries, and identifying complications that require intervention. Skills in communication and empathy are also emphasized, as midwives must provide emotional support and build trust with mothers during one of the most vulnerable times in their lives. Midwives are trained to perform key procedures, such as monitoring fetal heart rates, conducting pelvic exams, and administering medications when necessary (14).

In addition to clinical competencies, midwives are skilled in promoting holistic and patient-centered care. They are trained to respect cultural practices and individual preferences while ensuring that care remains evidence-based and safe. Midwives also learn to advocate for their patients, bridging gaps between families and healthcare systems to facilitate access to resources and services (15).

Continuing education is a critical component of midwifery training. Many midwives pursue advanced certifications in areas such as high-risk obstetrics, neonatal resuscitation, or family planning, allowing them to specialize further and provide more comprehensive care. Midwives also stay updated on the latest research and practices in maternal and neonatal health through workshops, seminars, and professional networks (16).

The skills of midwives extend beyond direct care. They are often involved in community education, teaching mothers about prenatal health, childbirth preparation, and newborn care. In low-resource settings, midwives play a vital role in public health, offering preventive care and working to reduce maternal and neonatal mortality rates. Their ability to adapt to diverse environments and respond effectively to emergencies underscores their importance as primary caregivers in maternal and newborn health (17). This extensive training and multifaceted skill set enable midwives to serve as essential providers of safe and effective care, contributing significantly to the well-being of mothers, newborns, and families worldwide.

The Future of Midwifery

The future of midwifery is poised to evolve in response to advancements in healthcare technology, changing societal needs, and global health priorities. As maternal and newborn health continues to be a focus of public health initiatives, midwives will play an increasingly critical role in achieving sustainable and equitable healthcare outcomes. One of the key developments in the future of midwifery lies in the integration of technology. Tools such as telemedicine, portable diagnostic devices, and digital health platforms are already beginning to enhance midwifery care. These innovations allow midwives to monitor maternal and fetal health remotely, providing support to mothers in underserved or rural areas where access to healthcare is limited (18).

Midwifery education is also likely to see significant advancements, with a greater emphasis on simulation-based training and the use of virtual reality (VR) to prepare midwives for complex scenarios. These technologies will enable midwives to gain more comprehensive and hands-on experience in a controlled environment, improving their ability to handle emergencies and provide high-quality care (19).

Global advocacy for midwifery is expected to grow, supported by organizations such as the World Health Organization (WHO) and the International Confederation of Midwives (ICM). These efforts aim to address the shortage of trained midwives in many countries, particularly in low-resource settings, by increasing funding for midwifery education and creating supportive policies. Strengthening midwifery networks and expanding

collaboration with other healthcare professionals will further elevate the role of midwives in healthcare systems (20).

Another important aspect of the future of midwifery is its focus on personalized, culturally sensitive care. As societies become more diverse, midwives will need to adapt their practices to meet the unique needs of women from various cultural, ethnic, and socioeconomic backgrounds. This includes respecting traditional birthing practices while ensuring safety and evidence-based care (21). Sustainability will also play a role in shaping midwifery. Efforts to reduce the environmental impact of healthcare will influence how midwives operate, from using eco-friendly supplies during deliveries to promoting sustainable practices in birthing centers (22).

Lastly, the future of midwifery will likely emphasize advocacy and leadership. Midwives are increasingly taking on roles as public health advocates, policymakers, and researchers, contributing to the development of maternal and newborn health strategies on a broader scale. Their involvement in shaping healthcare policies and programs will ensure that midwifery care remains central to achieving global health goals, such as those outlined in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (23). By embracing innovation, fostering collaboration, and addressing global challenges, the midwifery profession is set to continue evolving, providing vital care to mothers and newborns while shaping the future of maternal and neonatal health.

Conclusion

In recent years, midwifery has garnered renewed interest as an increasing number of women pursue alternative and holistic maternity care options. Midwives are essential in fostering healthy pregnancy and childbirth, and their individualized and comprehensive approach to maternity care has demonstrated improved outcomes for both mother and infant. Consequently, midwifery constitutes a vital element of contemporary healthcare, and its ongoing advancement is crucial for enhancing maternal and newborn health globally.

References

- (1) Rajabpoor M, Zarifnejad GH, Mohsenizadeh SM (2018). 3 Int. Res. J. Nur. Midwi ISSN: 2315-568X Barriers to the implementation of nursing process from the viewpoint of faculty members, nursing managers, nurses, and nursing students. *J Holist Nurs Midwifery*. 28: 137-142.
- (2) Wakasiaka S, Wamalwa D, Omoni G (2016). Factors influencing implementation of the nursing process in Naivasha District Hospital, Kenya. *JMWH*. 5: 152-155.
- (3) Sezici E, Ocakci AF, Kadioglu H (2017). Use of play therapy in nursing process: a prospective randomized controlled study. *J Nurs Scholarsh*. 49: 162-169.
- (4) Kim K (2017). Studies on the promotion of medical tourism through the role of medical dispute resolution committee. *J Int Arbitr*. 27: 61-72.
- (5) Amirthalingam K (2017). Medical dispute resolution, patient safety, and the doctor-patient relationship. *Singapore Med J*. 58: 681-684.
- (6) Shahinfar S, Abedi P, Najafian M, Abbaspoor Z, Mohammadi E, Alianmoghaddam N. Women's perception of continuity of team midwifery care in Iran: a qualitative content analysis. *BMC Pregnancy and Childbirth*. 2021 Dec;21:1-9.
- (7) Turan SB, Derya YA. The effects of midwifery care provided to primiparous mothers during the postpartum period on maternal attachment and post-traumatic growth. *Midwifery*. 2021 Dec 1;103:103140.
- (8) Da Silva TH. The Value of Emotional Intelligence in Midwifery: Enhancing Care and Outcomes for Mothers and Infants through Sustainable Development Goals and Leadership. *Journal of Womens Healthcare & Midwifery Research*. 2024 Aug 17;3(4):1-6.
- (9) Renfrew MJ, Cheyne H, Craig J, Duff E, Dykes F, Hunter B, Lavender T, Page L, Ross-Davie M, Spiby H, Downe S. Sustaining quality midwifery care in a pandemic and beyond. *Midwifery*. 2020 Sep 1;88:102759.
- (10) Dani C, Papini S, Iannuzzi L, Pratesi S. Midwife-to-newborn ratio and neonatal outcome in healthy term infants. *Acta Paediatrica*. 2020 Sep;109(9):1787-90.
- (11) Kimani RW, Maina R, Shumba C, Shaibu S. Maternal and newborn care during the COVID-19 pandemic in Kenya: re-contextualising the community midwifery model. *Human Resources for Health*. 2020 Oct 7;18(1):75.
- (12) Cummins A, Griew K, Devonport C, Ebbett W, Catling C, Baird K. Exploring the value and acceptability of an antenatal and postnatal midwifery continuity of care model to women and midwives, using the Quality Maternal Newborn Care Framework. *Women and Birth*. 2022 Feb 1;35(1):59-69.
- (13) Aktas S, Pasinlioğlu T. The effect of empathy training given to midwives on the empathic communication skills of midwives and the birth satisfaction of mothers giving birth with the help of these midwives: A quasi-experimental study. *Journal of evaluation in clinical practice*. 2021 Aug;27(4):858-67.
- (14) Bowen R, Taylor W. Skills for Midwifery Practice E-Book: Skills for Midwifery Practice E-Book. Elsevier Health Sciences; 2021 Dec 16.

- (15) Sintayehu Y, Desalew A, Geda B, Tiruye G, Mezmur H, Shiferaw K, Mulatu T. Basic neonatal resuscitation skills of midwives and nurses in Eastern Ethiopia are not well retained: An observational study. *PloS one*. 2020 Jul 24;15(7):e0236194.
- (16) Cowley A, Diver C, Edgley A, Cooper J. Capitalising on the transformational opportunities of early clinical academic career training for nurses, midwives and allied health professionals. *BMC Medical Education*. 2020 Dec;20:1-9.
- (17) ERKEK ZY, ALTINAYAK SÖ. The effect of simulation teaching technique on the improvement of episiotomy performance skills and state anxiety of midwifery students in Turkey: RCT. *Clinical Simulation in Nursing*. 2021 May 1;54:62-9.
- (18) Evans J, Taylor J, Browne J, Ferguson S, Atchan M, Maher P, Homer CS, Davis D. The future in their hands: Graduating student midwives' plans, job satisfaction and the desire to work in midwifery continuity of care. *Women and Birth*. 2020 Feb 1;33(1):e59-66.
- (19) Callander E, Sidebotham M, Lindsay D, Gamble J. The future of the Australian midwifery workforce—impacts of ageing and workforce exit on the number of registered midwives. *Women and Birth*. 2021 Feb 1;34(1):56-60.
- (20) Damar MU. What the literature on medicine, nursing, public health, midwifery, and dentistry reveals: An overview of the rapidly approaching metaverse. *Journal of Metaverse*. 2022 Dec 31;2(2):62-70.
- (21) Goemaes R, Beeckman D, Verhaeghe S, Van Hecke A. Sustaining the quality of midwifery practice in Belgium: Challenges and opportunities for advanced midwife practitioners. *Midwifery*. 2020 Oct 1;89:102792.
- (22) Suarez A. Black midwifery in the United States: Past, present, and future. *Sociology Compass*. 2020 Nov;14(11):1-2.
- (23) Irwin P, Jones D, Fealy S. What is ChatGPT and what do we do with it? Implications of the age of AI for nursing and midwifery practice and education: An editorial. *Nurse education today*. 2023 Aug;127:105835.