

Report on research-

An appreciative inquiry into midwifery education in Aotearoa

Background: Education is a transformative process, that promotes both self and professional development, and has rewards and challenges (Griffiths, 2012). For women, choosing a career pathway that gives meaning and purpose is an integral element of their decision making (Elley-Brown, 2015). The themes from our literature review identify midwifery educators as helping to sustain the profession by inspiring others, and promoting self and professional development through higher education. The role of the educator is identified as highly relational and often assumes an advisory and mentoring role (Elly-Brown, 2015). Midwifery educators promote growth and development of the profession (Albarran & Rosser, 2014). When considering recruitment of students into midwifery as a profession and midwives into education, it was clear that this is strongly linked to internal drivers; these include the feeling of making a difference, inspiring educational role models, having particular attributes, and encouragement from others (Albarran, & Rosser, 2014; Crowther, Hunter, McAra-Couper, Warren, Gilkison, Hunter, Fielder, & Kirkam, 2016; Doherty, M, 2010; Elley-Brown, 2015; Gilkison, Pairman, McAra-Couper, Kensington, & James, 2016; Gui, Barriball, & While, 2009). The credibility and impact of midwifery teachers was explored by Fraser, Avis & Mallik (2013) who found that teachers were valued for their unique and crucial role in the support of student's application of knowledge into practice. Briscoe & Clarke, (2018) also commented that midwifery education needs to be dynamic and responsive to societal changes, showing authenticity within a curriculum that is evidence-based and supports students to reach their full potential as a health professional. Reciprocity of relationship between women and midwives, midwifery colleagues, students and teachers are also valued (Crowther, Hunter, McAra-Couper, Warren, Gilkison, Hunter, Feilder, Kirkham, 2016).

He aha te mea nui? He tāngata, He tāngata, He tāngata!
What is the greatest thing? It is people, it is people, it is people.

Aim: This research seeks to understand what sustains and inspires midwifery educators.

Methodology: A mixed methods using descriptive epidemiology, appreciative inquiry and thematic analysis. Midwifery educators working in District Health Boards, tertiary institutions and in the private sector in Aotearoa/New Zealand were invited to participate in the on-line survey hosted by Qualtrics®. The survey was sent to the New Zealand College of Midwives membership database and was available for 14 days. The survey consisted of 14 questions collecting demographic data with six open-ended questions. Ninety-three midwives responded to the survey, 52 responses were deleted as they were not from midwifery educators, one response was invalid and deleted. Forty responses were included in the analysis.

Ethics: Ethical approval was granted by the Waikato Institute of Technology Human Ethics in Research Group on 25 June 2018.

Preliminary findings: The 40 midwifery educators that participated in the study were aged between 30 and 71 years old with a mean of 52 years of age. Participants self identified their ethnicity, four ethnic groups were named; New Zealand Māori, New Zealand European/Pakeha, British and European. New Zealand European/Pakeha consisted of 30.75% of the study population ($n=30$), Māori 2.5% ($n=2$), British 5.12% ($n=5$) and European 3.8% ($n=3$).

Years of experience as a practicing midwife ranged from two years to 44, with years of experience as a midwifery educator ranging from one year to 35 years with a mean of 8.2 years and a median of 6 years experience, see tables three and four.

Academic qualifications achieved varied greatly amongst the study population ranging from hospital based training to PhD. The highest qualifications achieved, 5% ($n=2$) have a PhD, 22.5% ($n=9$) have been awarded a Masters degree, 30% ($n=12$) educators have a Post Graduate Diploma, 22.5% ($n=9$) a Post Graduate certificate, 17.5% ($n=7$) a Bachelors degree and 2.5% ($n=1$) hospital based training. Of the educators that participated in the survey 45% ($n=18$) are employed by a tertiary institution, teaching in undergraduate and postgraduate programmes. A further 35% ($n=14$) are employed by a District Health Board as clinical midwifery educators. The private sector were well represented at 20% ($n=8$).

Overwhelming, midwives are attracted to education because of their love and passion for midwifery and women's health. This was supported by the theme of enjoyment and fulfilment experienced from teaching. The desire or need to also be working regular hours and being off call is a strong driver for the vocational change. Sustainability is supported by celebrating student success and observing the "aha moments". The empowerment of women through education creates a nurturing sisterhood that was a strong theme throughout many of the questions, including drivers, sustainability, overcoming challenges, and in contributing to the profession. Educators identified themselves as leaders and felt that they have role in promoting evidence-based practice, women-centred care, and protecting physiological birth.

It was clear through the language used in by the educators that the principles of Te Tiriti O Waitangi are woven into their practice as midwifery educators. We had a low response rate from Māori educators, however this is likely to be representative of the number of Māori midwives in education and clinical practice.

Themes that emerged from questions about challenges experienced in midwifery education reflect current challenges in clinical practice, such as poor remuneration, a lack of professional recognition, and increasing workloads. The participants identified that these were difficult to

manage and often resulted in feelings of needing to work harder or outside of contracted hours. Setting boundaries and practicing self-care were strategies for managing these challenges. These challenges are likely reflected in the lower than expected academic qualifications attained, as many midwives use annual leave to maintain contact with clinical practice and annual practicing certificate requirements.

Presentations at Trans-Tasman Conference

The findings and research were well received with verbal feedback about publishing in an international journal.

Actions

2018- Report to PC

2019- Publication in the NZCOM Journal

2019- Internal presentation