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"Doing" is never enough if "being" is neglected: the influence of an emotional intelligence programme (EIP) on midwives' emotional wellbeing and experiences of practice: a pilot survey study.

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'Doing' is never enough if 'Being' is neglected.

The influence of an Emotional Intelligence Programme (EIP) on midwives' emotional wellbeing and experiences of practice; a pilot survey study

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BACKGROUND: The contemporary role of the midwife is emotionally demanding with many midwives experiencing high levels of stress and burnout, and a great number considering leaving the profession. This is of critical concern to the profession and has serious implications for the delivery of high-quality, safe maternity care. Evidence suggests emotional intelligence is positively linked to wellbeing and has an inverse relationship with stress, and that EI education may increase EI. However, little is known about the influence on EI education on midwives' emotional wellbeing and experiences of practice.

EIP: A 4-month programme delivered over six group sessions (total 24 hours) was made available to midwives with the intention to (a) promote their emotional intelligence using self-relaxation practices, (b) enable them to utilise relaxation techniques for those in their care.

STUDY AIM: To assess the influence on EI programme on midwives' emotional wellbeing and experiences of practice.

DESIGN & METHOD: A pilot study using a survey design recruited 14 midwives with the intention to compare levels of emotional intelligence, mental and psychological wellbeing, and general self-efficacy (using Trait Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire (TEIQue), Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-Being Scale (WEMWBS), Psychological Well-being Scale (PWS) and General Self-Efficacy (GSE) Scale respectively) before attending and after completion of EIP. Further, the influence of EIP on participants' levels of self-awareness, relationships, feeling of empowerment and job satisfaction was assessed using Likert scale questions.

FINDINGS: As shown in Table 1, results from a paired samples t-test indicated a statically significant increase in Mean trait emotional intelligence and mental wellbeing after participating in EIP, compared with baseline. The increase in psychological wellbeing was reaching statistical significance ($p = 0.06$) and no significant improvement was shown in general self-efficacy levels ($p = 0.15$).

Table 1. Mean (SD) scores for before and after EIP

Instrument	Pre-EIP	Post-EIP	t-value	p-value
TEIQue	4.78 (0.25)	5.31 (0.15)	-2.18	0.02
WEMWBS	45.60 (8.52)	52.30 (6.27)	-1.76	0.05
PSW	42.30 (9.4)	48.40 (4.7)	-1.71	0.06
GSE	27.80 (3.93)	29.40 (2.36)	-1.06	0.15

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As shown in Figure 1, all participants (to different extents) agreed that attending EIP had positively influenced their self-awareness, relationships, feeling of empowerment and job satisfaction, except one participant who neither agreed nor disagreed with the positive influence of EIP on her relationships.

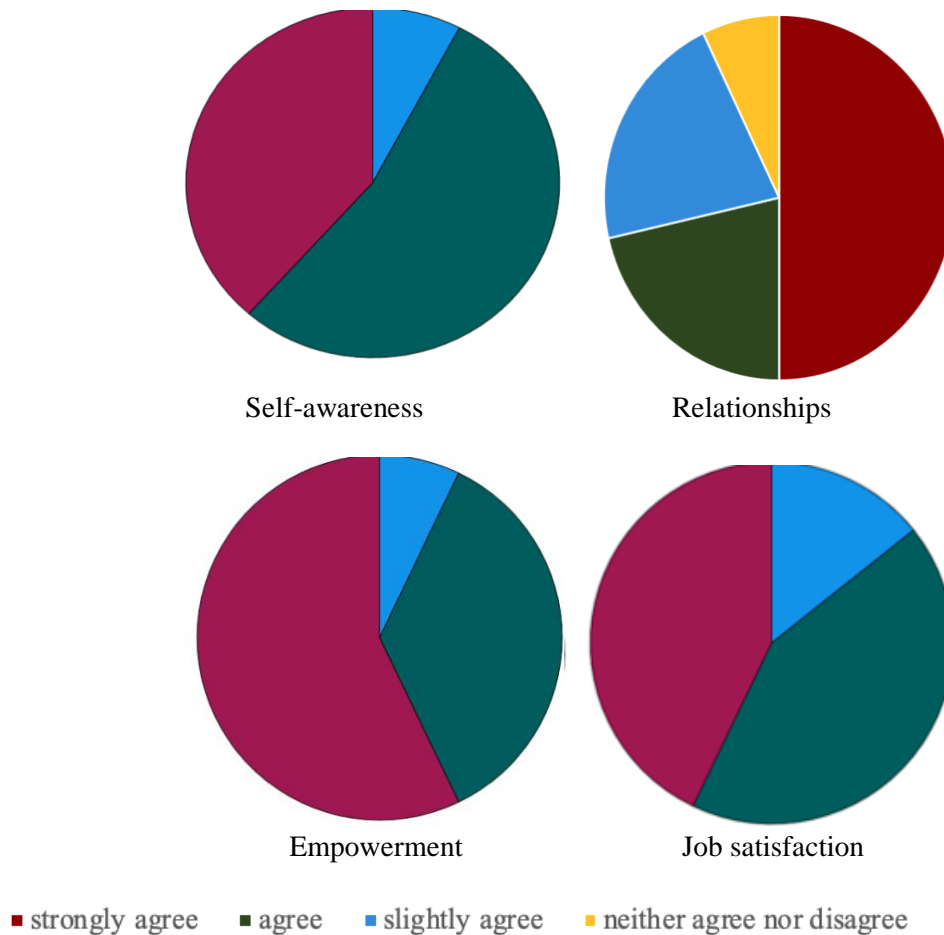


Figure 1. Influence of EPI on self-awareness, relationships, feeling of empowerment and job satisfaction (no participants responded slightly disagree, disagree or strongly disagree)

CONCLUSION: The survey results show EIP may positively influence midwives' emotional wellbeing and how they feel towards their role. However, due to the small sample size, robust conclusions cannot be drawn, and larger-scale studies are needed to further investigate the effectiveness of EI education on midwives' emotional wellbeing and experiences of practice.