# Gentle birth in New Zealand

Fourth International "Gentle Childbirth" Midwifery
Technology and Management Forum
Shenzhen, China, 26 August 2016
Liz James



### New Zealand



# Background

- Maternity care free to residents
- 3000 midwives
- 58,647 births per year
- Wide geographical area





## 1. Philosophy

- Birth is a normal physiological event
- Care, respect and compassion matter
- Importance of midwife-woman partnership
- Informed consent
- Choice (where possible) including of caregiver and place of birth
- Midwives are autonomous



#### Birth is normal

- Most women cared for by community based midwife
- Build relationship during pregnancy





## Choice of place of birth

- 4% home birth
- 30% midwife led unit
- 66% hospital
- Waikato has the highest primary birth rate in New Zealand





#### Midwife led unit



- Midwife only care
- Support from health care assistants
- Normal birth only
- Non pharmacological pain relief
- Nitrous oxide and narcotics pain relief
- No doctors on site







# Choice of caregiver

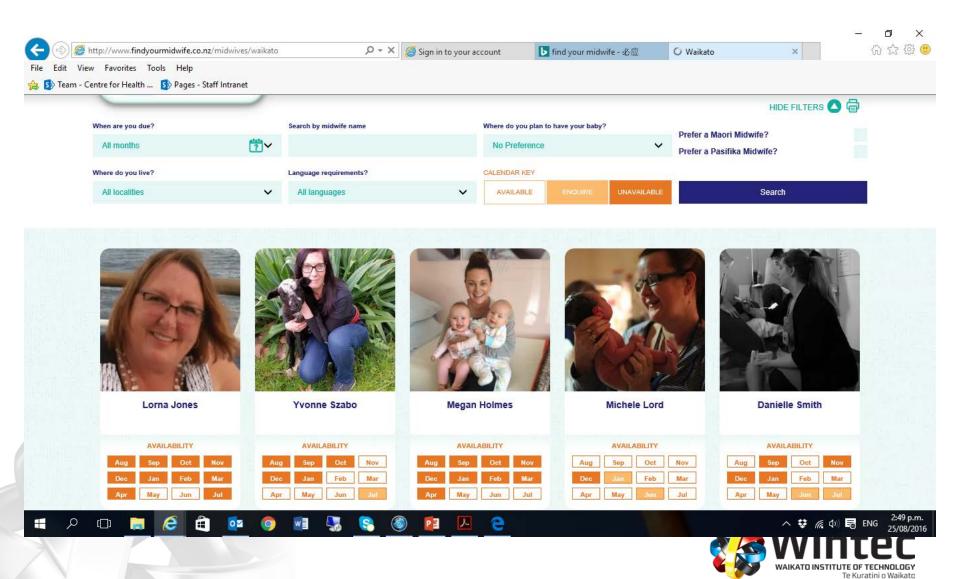
- 89% midwife
- 1% doctor
- 2% doctor and midwife
- 8% obstetrician

Ministry of Health Maternity Consumer Survey 2014





# Findyourmidwife.co.nz



#### Midwives are autonomous

- Provide care within integrated maternity service
- Work between home and hospital
- Refer to obstetricians and paediatricians if required
- Manage common emergencies i.e. PPH, neonatal resuscitation
- Prescribe
- Suture



# 2. During pregnancy



- Woman chooses midwife/caregiver by 12 weeks gestation
- Check-up at midwife's clinic or woman's home
- Midwife arranges tests in community services (blood, scan)
- Monthly fortnightly weekly visits
- Make birth plan



# Building confidence

- What stories do women hear?
- How we talk about birth?
- Woman centred care information
- Relationship throughout pregnancy
- Building confidence to birth
- Reduce fear or else get fight-flight response





#### Antenatal classes

- Most first time parents attend
- Free to parents
- Classes 12 hours
- Audited by government funder for satisfaction













#### 3. Labour

- Start labour at home
- Phone contact with midwife
- Midwife may visit at home
- Move to birth unit once established labour





### Welcomed to birth space

- Room warm
- Private, lights dimmed
- Aware of interruption to labour flow
- If less stress then contractions more effective





#### Labour and birth

- Time given to adapt to labour
- Able to go into self
- Choices respected
- Affirming environment
- Safety equipment out of sight







# Non pharmacological support

- Massage
- Therapeutic touch
- Water shower or pool
- 1:1 care
- Supporters present









# Skin to skin for one hour after birth



### Jake's birth

Clip not included





# Checking placenta together



#### If all is not normal

- Midwife can transfer to hospital
- Refer to obstetrician or paediatrician
- Manage common maternity emergencies





Our hospital colleagues





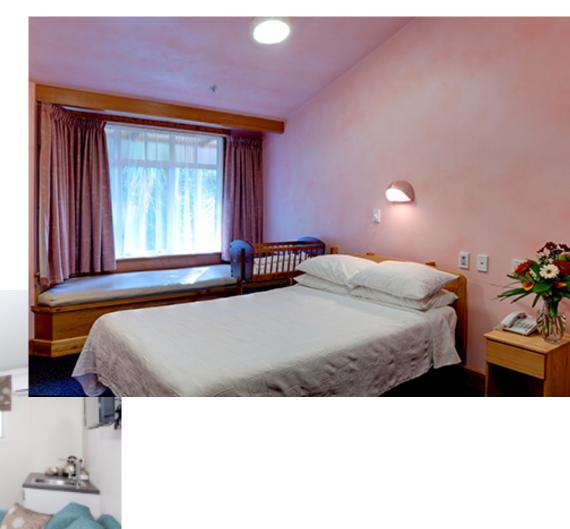
#### 4. Postnatal



- Time to know baby
- Family/partner to support and learn baby care
- Promote and protect breastfeeding (BFHI)



# Stay up to 48 hours





#### Home visit

- Midwife visits home daily/weekly to check mother and baby to 6 weeks
- Refer to well child services
- Refer to doctor





#### 5. Structures

- Bachelor of Midwifery 4 year degree
- Regulatory body
- Professional body
- Health advocacy and support service
- Legal framework





# Midwifery Council of New Zealand

- Regulatory body
- Protect safety of women and babies
- Ensure midwives competent and fit to practice
- Accredit schools of education
- Maintain register of midwives
- Issue annual practising certificate
- Manage any competence reviews

# New Zealand College of Midwives

- Professional body
- Provide education for midwives
- Indemnity insurance
- Professional guidance
- Resolutions committee
- Coordinate consumer feedback
- Coordinate first year of practice programme for new graduates





# Health & Disability Commissioner

- Advocacy service for all health consumers
- Manage complaints
- Investigate and may refer to regulatory body
- May discipline
- May make recommendations to the profession



## Midwifery education

- High entry criteria (between medicine and nursing)
- 4 year degree
- 2400 hours theory & 2400 hours practice
- Learn skills and knowledge
- Learn culture of midwifery





# Standard primiparae (S.P.) outcomes

- Aged 20-34 years
- No obstetric complications
- To compare outcomes between geographical areas





### S.P. Outcomes (Waikato)

- 10.6% Caesarean section
- 15.1% Instrumental birth
- 74.1% Normal vaginal birth
- 7.8% Induction of labour
- 12.2% Episiotomy
- 5.4% Third degree tear
- 46.9% no perineal tear
- 7.9% premature birth



## 2014 type of birth NZ (MOH)

Type of birth	Number	Percentage
Spontaneous vaginal birth	37,821	64.8
Spontaneous vertex	37,656	64.6
Spontaneous breech	165	0.3
Assisted birth	5,419	9.3
Forceps only	2,068	3.5
Vacuum only	3,231	5.5
Forceps and vacuum	17	0.0
Assisted breech	57	0.1
Breech extraction	46	0.1
Caesarean section	15,088	25.9
Emergency caesarean	8,038	13.8
Elective caesarean	7,050	12.1
Unknown	865	_
Total	59,193	100.0

# Ongoing improvement

- Women's feedback
- Statistical outcomes reviewed annually
- Serious event review
- Increase use of midwifeled units
- Education of midwives
- Education of women





#### Cascade of intervention

- Woman alone and stressed
- Unfamiliar carers
- Unfamiliar procedures
- Increase in stress
- Fight-flight response
- Affects labour hormones



## Support for normal birth

- Birth plan
- Evidence based practice
- Ongoing risk assessment physical and emotional
- Support the woman be patient and kind
- Observe do not interfere unless required
- Eat and drink as desired
- Intermittent auscultation fetal heart



## Support for normal birth

- Some intervention may keep birth normal
- Early detection and referral if problems
- Freedom of movement (upright or side best)
- Spontaneous pushing
- Physiological third stage with delayed cord clamping

World Health Organisation, 1996



#### Birth is

- A new family member
- A time of celebration
- Birth is a normal life event
- Remember:

midwives need women need midwives





#### A final word

- Fear and a love of technology has affected how we see birth
- Birth is relational
- When midwives are confident in normal birth, so too are women.





# For the mothers and babies – thank you



#### References

- Health and Disability Commissioner <a href="http://www.hdc.org.nz">http://www.hdc.org.nz</a>
- Midwifery Council of New Zealand <u>https://www.midwiferycouncil.health.nz</u>
- Ministry of Health. (2015). Maternity Consumer Survey 2014.
   Wellington, NZ: Research New Zealand.
- Ministry of Health. (2012). Report on Maternity 2010. Wellington,
   NZ: Ministry of Health.
- New Zealand College of Midwives <a href="https://www.midwife.org.nz">https://www.midwife.org.nz</a>
- Waikato District Health Board Maternity Annual Report July 2014-June 2015
- World Health Organisation (1996) Care in normal birth: a practical guide.

