

Priorities for Midwifery Research in Perth, Western Australia: A Delphi Study

Fenwick et al. (2006)

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For which topic were research priorities identified?

midwifery

In which location was the research priority setting conducted?

Australia - Australia

Why was it conducted at all?

Over the years, researchers and clinicians have been distanced by seemingly impenetrable barriers. This might be partly explained because research performed solely in academic or clinical settings can lead to disparity between theory and practice. Collaborative research undertaken by nurse/midwifery academics and clinicians has been recommended as one strategy for generating clinically meaningful nursing/midwifery knowledge. As other areas of nursing have shown, research priorities identified by midwives directly involved in the care of women, infants and their families are likely to have particular relevance to the profession. The work presented in this paper was commissioned by Western Australia's (WA) only tertiary maternity referral hospital and was viewed as the first step towards developing a collaborative research programme to generate knowledge relevant to midwifery clinical practice in WA. The study was undertaken in response to the increasing importance of using research to inform practice in order to ensure evidence-based practice (EBP) clinical settings.

What was the objective?

to identify the research priorities of midwives at five public maternity hospitals in Western Australia's metropolitan area of Perth

What was the outcome?

a ranking list of 7 research topics

How long did the research prioritization take?

October 2012 - August 2013

Which methods were used to identify research priorities?

Delphi

How were the priorities for research identified exactly?

Step 1: Delphi round 1: midwives were asked to provide a list of five important questions, problems or approaches relating to the midwifery care of women and their families during pregnancy, childbirth and early parenting that they believe should be studied, 556 statements submitted identifying 64 different questions, problems or approaches. Step 2: data processing: thematic analysis: 5 categories identified, sub-themes collapsed to develop 17 specific research topics within four major categories. Step 3: Delphi round 2: participants were asked to rate each research topic along 3 questions: How important is this research topic to the care of women? How important is this research topic to the care of women's families? How important is this research topic to midwifery?

Which stakeholders took part?

Midwives. Delphi round 1: 117 participants. Delphi round 2: 125 participants.

How were stakeholders recruited?

Information fliers supported by information sessions were provided in each hospital to ensure the recruitment of as many midwives as possible.

Were stakeholders actively involved or did they just participate?

Stakeholders were mere participants of the research prioritization process; they were not actively involved in the process.