

Opportunities and Challenges in Midwifery Education: A Literature Review

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Abstract : Midwives are being seen as a key factor in returning birth care to a normal physiologic process that is woman-centered. On the other hand, more needs to be done to increase access for every woman to professional midwifery care. Because of the nature of the midwifery specialty, the magnitude of the effect that can result from a lack of knowledge if midwives make a mistake in their care has the potential to affect a large number of the birthing population. So, the development, running, and management of midwifery educational programs should follow international standards and come after a thorough community needs assessment. At the same time, the number of accredited midwifery educational programs needs to be increased so that larger numbers of midwives will be educated and qualified, as well as access to skilled midwifery care will be increased. Indeed, the selection of promising midwives is important for the successful completion of an educational program, achievement of the program goals, and retention of graduates in the field. Further, the number of schooled midwives in midwifery education programs, their background, and their experience constitute some concerns in the higher education industry. Basically, preceptors and clinical sites are major contributors to the midwifery education process, as educational programs rely on them to provide clinical practice opportunities. In this regard, the selection of clinical training sites should be based on certain criteria to ensure their readiness for the intended training experiences. After that, communication, collaboration, and liaison between teaching faculty and field staff should be maintained. However, the shortage of clinical preceptors and the massive reduction in the number of practicing midwives, in addition to unmanageable workloads, act as significant barriers to midwifery education. Moreover, the medicalized approach inherent in the hospital setting makes it difficult to practice the midwifery model of care, such as watchful waiting, non-interference in normal processes, and judicious use of interventions. Furthermore, creating a motivating study environment is crucial for avoiding unnecessary withdrawal and retention in any educational program. It is well understood that research is an essential component of any profession for achieving its optimal goal and providing a foundation and evidence for its practices, and midwifery is no exception. Midwives have been playing an important role in generating their own research. However, the selection of novel, researchable, and sustainable topics considering community health needs is also a challenge. In conclusion, ongoing education and research are the lifeblood of the midwifery profession to offer a highly competent and qualified workforce. However, many challenges are being faced, and barriers are hindering their improvement.

Keywords : barriers, challenges, midwifery education, educational programs

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