

Midwives' views and their relevance to recruitment, retention and return

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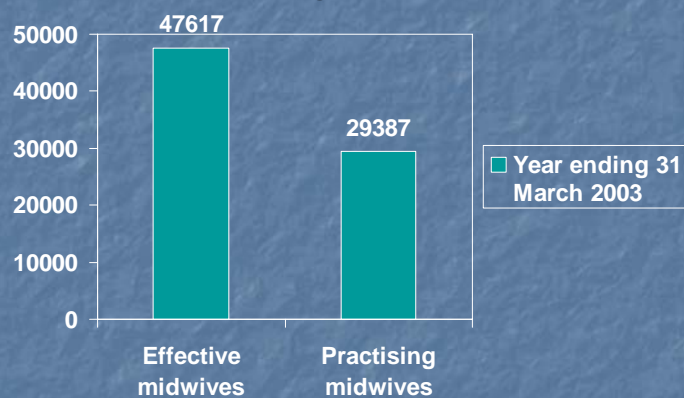
Who is there to be recruited?

Comparison of practising midwives with those on the effective register

Year ending 31 March 2003	Effective midwives	Practising midwives	Percentage practising midwives
1999	93776	32803	34.98
2000	92183	33897	36.77
2001	90378	33291	36.84
2002	86495	33165	38.34
2003	47617	29387	61.74

Nursing and Midwifery Council (2004) Statistical analysis of the register, 1 April 2002 to 31 March 2003.

Comparison of effective and practising midwives



Nursing and Midwifery Council (2004) Statistical analysis of the register, 1 April 2002 to 31 March 2003.

38.26% of midwives with
effective registrations are
not working as midwives

= 18,230 midwives

What do midwives not want
in their working lives?

Reasons for leaving midwifery

Phase One revealed that making the decision to leave midwifery was often a protracted and painful process.... This analysis painted a depressing picture of a group of very committed professional women, struggling over a protracted period of time, within an environment of increasing confrontation and stress.

Why Do Midwives Leave?

Reasons for leaving midwifery

In Phase Two respondents gave five main reasons for leaving. The largest group was those leavers who were dissatisfied with midwifery (29.9%, n=286).

Why Do Midwives Leave?

Reasons for leaving midwifery

Dissatisfaction with midwifery was, however, a major issue for all groups of leavers.

Why Do Midwives Leave?

Reasons for leaving midwifery

Dissatisfaction was manifest in different ways for midwives in the different groups. However an important finding to emerge from this study was *the unwillingness of a large number of midwives to continue to practise the type of midwifery that is demanded of them in the modern NHS, despite their wish to continue as midwives.*

Why Do Midwives Leave?

Reasons for leaving midwifery

This concern was particularly evident among the younger and more recently qualified midwives in the study. What clearly emerges from this study is the high level of frustration felt by midwives, particularly recent entrants and those in the early years of their midwifery career.

Why Do Midwives Leave?

Reasons for leaving midwifery

A further source of dissatisfaction derived from the requirements placed upon midwives to *rotate through all shifts and around all areas of clinical practice. Many midwives felt that they had insufficient control over their working lives.* Frequent dislocations at work made it difficult to build and maintain confidence and expertise, and difficult to develop and sustain relationships with colleagues and clients.

Why Do Midwives Leave?

Reasons for leaving midwifery

Fuelling these concerns was a frequently articulated need for more effective support within the work environment. Midwives who themselves lack support are unlikely to be able to provide optimum support for childbearing women.

Why Do Midwives Leave?

Powerlessness

Managers at all levels of the managerial hierarchy felt that they were relatively powerless and had limited control over their work and limited power to make fundamental changes to the practice situation. Moreover, many Heads of Midwifery believed that their access to the real sources of power, the decision-making bodies within their Trusts, was ineffective.

Why Do Midwives Leave? Talking to Managers

Midwifery resources and establishments

Midwifery establishments were widely felt to be insufficient to meet the demands of contemporary practice, and this problem was further exacerbated where increasing client dependency was most evident.

Why Do Midwives Leave? Talking to Managers

Why do midwives return?

Preliminary findings

I needed to feel I was doing a
'worthwhile' job. (16)

Why do midwives return?

Job satisfaction is very
important to me. (16)

Why do midwives return?

Missing midwifery

Well it was just... you know your identity as a midwife.

Why do midwives return?

Missing midwifery

Once or twice I thought about going back, and I did miss it because it was part of who I was. When we came to this area I didn't know anybody here. So I had to be, I couldn't be this Susan the midwife. It was Susan ... Mason's wife... and I wanted to be me.

Why do midwives return?

... that's what I'd always wanted to do. I'd wanted to go back to midwifery. That's what I was good at. (R3)

Why do midwives return?

I had not had the opportunity to return [previously] because of my personal circumstances. (15)

Why do midwives return?

I left to have my family and once they were all approaching school age I returned. (2)

Why do midwives return?

But

25% of returners do not practise after completing the Return to Practice course.

What do midwives want in
their working lives?

Why do midwives stay?

Preliminary findings

Making a difference

Midwives want to make a difference, and job satisfaction appears to be improved when they feel they have been able to make a difference to those in their care: *Continue to practise as I want to make a difference to the care of all women (102); Although demanding and difficult at times, what we do makes a huge difference to women's lives and experiences of becoming mothers (30); Thoroughly enjoy working with women and families and feeling that I might have made a difference (18).*

Why do midwives stay?

It is also important to midwives that they make a difference not just to their clients, but to their work colleagues and to the profession of midwifery as a whole: *Feel I can contribute positively to people's lives, the clients, staff and service (29); Still want to improve maternity services and improve women's chances of having positive, pleasurable experience of pregnancy and childbirth (38).*

Why do midwives stay?

Advocacy and passion

Midwives talk passionately about their work and about the profession. They describe how they are advocates for the women in their care and for the profession of midwifery: *Enjoy opportunities open to me in my role, health education, supporter, advocate, empowerment of women etc (88).*

Why do midwives stay?

I think I'm attracted to work that involves that there's a fight to be fought I think and there's so much wrong with maternity services and just the whole way birth's going (Int-9); I think for me it's important to do work I can feel passionate about and I can get very passionate about midwifery (Int-9).

Why do midwives stay?

Relationship with clients

At the heart of job satisfaction and why midwives stay in the profession appears to be the interaction and relationship midwives have with the families in their care: *Enjoy relationship I have with the mothers (77); Sharing people's lives in real situations (20)*

Why do midwives stay?

Finding a niche

Develop rapport and friendship from booking and find it rewarding to carry on their care (81).

Why do midwives stay?

Finding a niche

The main thing really is the client contact that I really enjoy and it's nice being able to have almost like my own case load of women...and I'm seeing them regularly... that's where you get direct feedback from the women and...they appreciate having one main person that they know (Int-12).

Why do midwives stay?

Finding a niche

Continuity of care

Indeed one of the key themes regarding the relationship with clients appears to be the satisfaction gained by both midwives and their clients, when midwives have the opportunity to provide continuity of care. Job satisfaction from providing continuity was expressed particularly by community and integrated midwives: *As a community midwife you build up a very strong relationship with your clients and when you get the chance to deliver a lady that you have looked after from start of pregnancy to end it is just the icing on the cake, especially if it's at home (75).*

Why do midwives stay?

Finding a niche

That makes a huge difference, actually becoming familiar with women and having some sort of relationship with them instead of a very fleeting.... (Int-9); It's seeing them throughout really like from the booking to antenatal period and then seeing them afterwards at home with their babies until you discharge to the health visitor (Int-11).

Why do midwives stay?

Finding a niche

Some midwives have found a niche in midwifery that they enjoy, and this has also increased their sense of autonomy: Enjoy being own boss as infant feeding co-ordinator (14); I've been given freedom and support to develop a breastfeeding initiative (33).

Why do midwives stay?

Protecting normality

Protecting the normality of birth and having the opportunity to practise normal midwifery, also seems a key to job satisfaction for many midwives: *Miracle of attending...a normal birth the happy and privileged feelings that are generated (72); Believe passionately in natural childbirth (74); Normal midwifery is encouraged of which I am an advocate (9); Enjoy challenge of trying to normalise care for high risk women (9).*

Why do midwives stay?

Having the opportunity to ensure women have choice and control over childbirth appears to be influenced by the degree to which midwives have choice and control over the type of midwifery they practise. A number of those interviewed felt they were working in an environment where they were able to protect normality: *Great team of midwives upholding a philosophy of normality and focused on giving mothers choice and control over their experience of childbirth (79); So we try to kind of say...we're protecting normality to try to reduce...a lot of unnecessary interference. There are some procedures that are just procedures. They're not necessary even on the labour ward (Int-11).*

Why do midwives stay?

Autonomy

Having autonomy and flexibility to protect the normality of childbirth, and being able to practise midwifery in a way that is acceptable to the beliefs of the individual midwife, seems to be an important factor in why many midwives stay in the profession: *...that's one of the things that attracted me to the job – that there's that level of ...flexibility and autonomy really to try new things out and there's a lot of support for that (Int-12).*

Why do midwives stay?

I think Sure Start gives that flexibility that you can work in different ways and see people in their own homes and there's enough time to spend with people...so it's much more satisfying (Int-12); I'm quite independent and I work quite well on my own.... And one of the lovely things about midwifery is that you are totally autonomous (Int-5).

Why do midwives stay?

Being able to work autonomously seems particularly achievable in certain work settings: Working in midwifery led unit, for the first time felt autonomy, for me this has been very satisfying and rewarding (79); Autonomous practitioner, midwifery led unit, no doctors on site (59).

Why do midwives stay?

Being able to work in the community and having some autonomy over my working day (more satisfying than hospital) (5); My post (community) gives me much more freedom personal – professional autonomy than hospital which I couldn't stand anymore! (38).

Why do midwives stay?

Some midwives describe the satisfaction from working in an environment where others share their philosophy of care: Being part of a wider team who share my philosophies (20); Work with colleagues who have a similar philosophy to me... (88); You can give the care that you want to give...we're very fortunate that the philosophy of the unit everyone agrees with (Int-5).

Why do midwives stay?

Real midwifery

- Making a difference
- Developing relationships
- Time
- Autonomy

During this period of time it became even more evident that the overwhelming quality of the care I was able to provide for women in each practice was extremely different. This was due to having the autonomy and time to provide the care needed for the Bellevue women, whilst having to offer the traditional midwifery care to the other practice.

McBennett A (2003) *Midwife's report*. In: PC-AIMS. Primary care and integrated maternity services. Report of the Bellevue Project. Perinatal Institute, Birmingham.