

## Survey on Hospital Midwives Practice and Role

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### Outline of the Survey

#### 1. Aim

In recent years most midwives find a position in a hospital when they finish their midwifery education. But in hospital obstetricians wholly control childbirth, attending even a normal delivery. And it is often said the institutions where midwifery practice does not differ from nursing are increasing. Under these circumstances what midwives do think about their practice, what scope of practice do they want to develop, how do maternity ward head nurses, directors of nursing and obstetricians perceive midwifery and how do mothers evaluate midwifery practice soon after their deliveries? We undertook this survey to get responses from hospital staff and mothers. The aim is to provide basic data for more progressive discussion of the role of midwifery.

#### 2. Sample

We selected 1,174 institutions providing more than 200 beds including a maternity ward, and 1 director of nursing, 1 obstetrician, 1 maternity ward head nurse and 1 midwife from each hospital. We designated midwife ages between 20 to 59 years for demographic proportion, and a managing doctor for selecting respondents from obstetricians. We asked 94 institutions (2 random-sampled institutions in each prefecture) to choose 1,410 mothers who had their first normal childbirth during the survey period.

### **3. Method**

We sent questionnaires and attached return envelopes to a director of nursing at each institution, who delivered the questionnaire to respondents. Questionnaires to mothers were delivered through a ward head nurse during their hospital stay. We required each respondents to return their questionnaire to the JNA Survey & Research Section individually.

### **4. Period**

From February, when we sent questionnaires, to the end of March in 1992, by which the respondents had to return questionnaires.

### **5. Response rate**

We received 840 responses (71.2% response rate) from midwives, 817 (69.2%) from directors of nursing, 849 (71.9%) from head nurses, 803 (68.1%) from doctors and 957 (67.9%) from mothers.

## **Part 1 Survey on midwifery role**

### **1. Sample characteristics**

The percentage of respondents aged from 34 to 44 years turned out to be higher than that of all midwives in the same generation currently in hospital practice, and the 20 to 29 years age group turned to be lower, because respondents' ages had been designated by each hospital. 26.4% of respondents had 5 to 9 years experience in midwifery, while 23.5% had 10 to 14 years experience. As to the years of nursing experience before they obtained midwifery qualification, overwhelming majority, 78.7% of midwives, had less than 4 years of experience. Concerning marital status, the married ratio was higher than the unmarried; 58.9% were married and 36.5% were unmarried. 89.9% of married midwives had children.

### **2. Institutional characteristics**

The 24.5% of midwives were working in 300-399 bed institutions and 23.3% were in 200-299 bed institutions. 25.1% of the institutions were set up by prefectural governments, and 14.4% were set up by medical juridical corporations or private organizations. 80.6% of institutions were general hospitals and 9.6% were university hospitals.

### 3. Working situation

The 92.9% of clients were women and 62.9% were new born babies. 31.5% of midwives had less than 4 years experience in current hospitals, whereas 8.5% had 5 to 9 years experience. To the question whether they were employed as midwives or not, 83.0% of respondents answered Yes, 16.4% said No. 92% of those replying No pointed to "organizational policies" as the reason.

### 4. Care system

The respondents' supervisor was likely to be a maternity ward head nurse. 67.7% of head nurses were registered midwives and 28.5% were registered nurses. 70.7% of respondents attended between 1 to 10 deliveries in the previous month, whereas the 18.5% attended between 11 to 20 deliveries. 39.9% of respondents belonged to a ward in which between 5 to 9 midwives were in practice, with 25.2% between 10 to 14 midwives. 29.2% of the wards had between 16 to 20 nursing staff. The numbers between 21 to 25 got the next highest percentage. 29.5% of the wards had between 40 to 49 beds, and 24.5% between 30 to 39 beds.

Concerning current ward nursing systems, we required the respondents to answer multiple questions. A team nursing system was chosen by 63.8%, functional nursing by the 40.8% and attending nursing by 11.1%. To the enquiry whether the specific nursing system was suitable for their practice, 51.5% cited difficulties in choosing one system. The 71.7% of respondents had experience in functional nursing, and 70.7% in team nursing. Attending nursing had been practiced by 21.5%.

About working in rotation in addition to maternity ward, 48.8% of midwives agreed. 262 midwives (42.5%) out of 612 of those choosing the attending nurse system said Yes to the question whether shift work system was necessary or not. To the question that 1 nursing staff was necessary to care for 3 inpatients and among nursing team more than 8 should be midwives, 38.7% of midwives thought the midwife's number was appropriate. 41.5% said the number of midwife was small. To the question whether the number of midwives was regulated in a current ward or not, 14.2% said Yes, 31.1% of whom mentioned the regulated number of midwives was between 10 to 19, whereas 22.7% mentioned 8. To the enquiry whether the quota was complete, 60% said Yes. However only 26.7% of midwives said the number of midwives in a current ward was appropriate.

## **5. Job satisfaction and problems**

To the question whether the respondents were satisfied with their job as midwives or not, 44.3% said No, 39.8% answered they could not say, whereas 14.5% said Yes. For the reasons why they said No, 45.2% cited midwifery practice was not distinct from nursing practice. To the enquiry whether current midwifery practice should be improved or not, 66.1% responded Yes. To the enquiry whether they were competent with their midwifery skills, 30.0% responded No. To the enquiry whether they were conscious of problems in current midwifery practice, 78.7% responded Yes. However, only 31.3%, out of the 661 responded Yes, mentioned they were actively trying to solve the problem.

## **6. Education and workshop**

To the enquiry to what degree their midwifery school education backed up their current practice, 87.4% responded midwifery school education helped them totally or fairly much. To the enquiry whether they were attending workshops out side hospital, the 85.6% said Yes. 39.1% of them mentioned they were attending once a year. To the enquiry whether they were attending academic conferences, 60.5% said Yes. 68.9% of them mentioned once a year about attending times.

## **7. Regular practice**

Concerning 33 items in practice, we asked midwives to classified them into two categories; regular practice or on-the-spot work. For on-the-spot work, we asked them what they thought about it. The practices classified by more than 80% of midwives into "regular" were group guidance, vaginal examination, tocomonitoring, fetal electrocardiograph monitoring, normal childbirth attendance and mamma care.

## **Part 2 Midwifery role perceived by nursing directors**

The 26.7% of nursing directors who responded to the survey worked at an institution organized by prefectural governments. 15.4% were organized by other public medical organizations and 10.8% were organized by medical care juridical corporations or private authorities. 79.8% of institutions were general hospitals (excluding university hospitals). 43.9% of maternity wards were mixed with other wards, 43.3% were combined

with gynecology wards and 11.6% were single maternity wards. To the enquiry whether nursing directors employed midwives as midwifery specialists or not, 87.6% said Yes. The 64.6% out of 11.8% who responded No to the enquiry mentioned organizational policies as the reason. To the enquiry whether midwives were working in rotation in wards other than maternity wards in their institution or not, 43.5% responded Yes. To the enquiry what type of nursing system they adopted, 74.9% said team nursing system. To the enquiry whether the adopted system suited midwifery practice or not, The 66.5% responded Yes. 77.4% of nursing directors said midwives made full use of their skills as specialists.

### **Part 3 Midwifery role perceived by maternity ward head nurses**

The 24.5% of the institutions where maternity ward head nurses worked at were set up by prefectural governments. 14.5% were set up by medical care juridical corporations or private organizations and 13.3% were set up by other public medical organizations. The 78.2% of institutions were general hospitals (excluding university hospitals). 46.8% of maternity wards were mixed with other wards, 41.3% were obstetrics and gynecology wards.

To the enquiry whether they employed midwives as midwifery specialists or not, the 80.1% said Yes. 76.7% out of 18.7% of those said No mentioned organizational policies as the reason. To the enquiry whether midwives were working in rotation in wards other than maternity wards in their institution or not, 40.0% responded Yes. To the enquiry what type of nursing system they were adopting, 70.3% mentioned the nursing team system and 43.9% mentioned the functional nursing system.

### **Part 4 Midwifery role perceived by obstetricians**

The 28.1% of obstetricians responded to the survey were 40 to 44 years. The age group of between 35 to 39 obtained the second highest percentage. 37.7% of respondents had less than 4 years of experience in their current institution, and 24.9% had between 5 to 9 years of experience. Doctor's years of experience was to be relatively short.

The type of care more than 80% of doctors entrust to midwives to do was as follows: individual health guidance to mothers (81.4%), group health guidance (93.6%), tocomonitoring and fetal electrocardiograph monitoring (84.7%), normal childbirth attendance (88.2%) and

mamma care (97.5%).

To the enquiry whether obstetricians knew midwifery education curriculum or not, the 14.9% responded they knew it throughly, whereas 65.3% responded they knew it partially. To the enquiry whether obstetricians knew the legal status of midwifery practice or not, 16.2% responded they knew it throughly and 60.0% responded they knew it partially. To the enquiry whether midwives made use of their skills as specialists in their institution, 76.1% responded Yes.

## **Part 5 Survey on childbirth**

The 43.7% of mothers responding to the survey were in their late twenties and the mean age was 28.3 years. The youngest was 17 and the oldest was 43. For the reasons why they chose a particular hospital, 44.9% pointed to easy access to the hospital. 42.9% pointed to doctors' high reputation. Parents' and/or acquaintances' recommendations obtained a high percentage, 40.4%.

High percentage of mothers, 93.8%, responded midwives were practicing when they were hospitalized. As the reasons why mothers noticed that midwives were working there, 61.0% mentioned they had previously known it. 16.4% said they presumed this, the 14.6% mentioned midwives themselves explained their position. To the enquiry whether mothers thought midwives' attendance helpful or not, 85.5% said Yes.

The 83.8% attended mothers' classes, 74.5% of whom attended inhospital classes. Enquiring the most informative course, 66.7% said delivery methods, 59.3% said nutrition during pregnancy and 56.3% said daily care during pregnancy.

The 86.2% were satisfied with the hospital where they had their delivery. 1.9% were not satisfied, with 40.0% saying they had no attendance during labour. 26.7% mentioned pain at delivery and 20.0% mentioned different delivery methods from what they wanted. 71.0% said they would choose the same hospital next time and 26.9% responded they were not sure.