

Midwives Vital Personnel for Communities and Families

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I am honored to have been invited to write an editorial to the journal of Woman's Health Care. I would like in this article to write on the role of midwives in the reproductive and women health. Also I would like to enumerate the factors that will improve the outcome of the midwives effort. A midwife is a person who has successfully completed a midwifery education programme that is recognized in the country where it is located and that is based on the International Confederation of Midwives (ICM) Essential Competencies for Basic Midwifery Practice and the framework of the ICM Global Standards for Midwifery Education; who has acquired the requisite qualifications to be registered and/or legally licensed to practice midwifery and use the title 'midwife'; and who demonstrates competency in the practice of midwifery [1]. The midwife is a person, usually a woman, who works to give the necessary support, care and advice during pregnancy, labor and the postpartum period, to conduct births on the midwife's own responsibility and to provide care for the newborn babies. The midwife provides preventive measures, promotes normal birth, identifies the obstetric complications in mother, and timely refers the complicated cases during pregnancy and labor [2]. The midwife has an important task in health counseling and education, not only for the woman, but also within the family and the community. Issues such as family planning, antenatal education, sexual and reproductive health as well as child health all are practiced by the midwives. The midwife provides essential care during delivery, often with little support and under the adverse conditions [3]. They have an obvious role in the world where people have achieved dramatic reduction in obstetric complications [4]. They have an essential role in achieving the millennium development goals to reduce maternal and newborn mortality. Yet today, the profession of midwifery often garners little recognition, meager income and limited career opportunities contributing to their acute shortage [5]. Proper training, empowerment and support of the midwives in the community offer high quality of women care with the most cost-effective and low technology, to universal access to maternal healthcare [6]. All over the world the roadmap for reducing maternal and neonatal deaths cannot be achieved without considering the midwives involvement. The need for an improved midwifery service provision (both in quality as well as quantity) has been recognized and in the past few years quite a number of initiatives have been developed addressing this with special

emphasis on care provision in the community setting. There is a great variation in the basic educational level of certified nurse-midwives which makes it difficult to speak about a standard of quality in care provision in facilities. All the midwifery schools (village midwife as well as the only functioning certificate nurse-midwife school) need urgent rehabilitation and appropriate supplies and teaching materials. The International Confederation of Midwives (ICM), UNFPA and WHO in the First International Forum on Scaling up Midwifery held in Hammamet, Tunisia in 2006 recommended the following: training and education, systematic supportive supervision especially at the community level with qualified and capable supervisors, incorporate village midwives into the health system as employees by providing salaries and/or incentives (either monetary or other motivations), ensure that village midwives have access to sufficient supplies and medications, look into providing village midwives with better communication means as cell phones and provide better links from community to referral facilities with EmOC, monitoring and evaluation [7]. It is very miserable to say that, The leading cause of death for women in reproductive age in developing countries today is obstetrical complications. Thus, and in conclusion, at the present it is unlikely that the Millennium Development Goal related improving maternal health will be achieved in developing countries without strategic plan to consider the midwives as a corner stone in this issue.

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