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Global midwifery: Principles, policy and practice

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Global Midwifery: Principles Policy and Practice - A Book Review

**Kemp J, Maclean D G. & Moyo. N, (2021) *Global midwifery: Principles, Policy and Practice*
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BOOK HIGHLIGHTS

This midwifery book is not a text about midwifery care, but a book about advancing the profession of midwifery. Its publication comes at a time when midwives are increasingly being recognized as a crucial human resource to provide quality maternal and newborn health care in order to achieve Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) targets and ensure the maternal mortality ratio (MMR) declines to at least 70/100,000 live births. Joy Kemp the lead writer, in her preface, described the importance of this book and how the authors worked with other team members to bring it to publication. The importance of this book is expressed in the foreword by three key midwifery leaders: Fran McConville, WHO (World Health Organization) in Geneva, Switzerland, Petra ten Hoope-Bender, UNFPA (United Nations Population Fund) also based in Geneva and Franka Cadee, the President of the ICM (International Confederation of Midwives). They state that this book explores multiple aspects of global midwifery, providing unique insights into and clarity about what is really needed to successfully implement policies and practices. The authors want to safeguard future leadership in the profession of midwifery to ensure that women, newborns, and families of the future will not only survive but thrive and transform their societies.

The book stresses that midwifery is a profession that is autonomous, separate and distinct from nursing and medicine. Apart from specially trained nurses and doctors, only midwives can provide the full scope of midwifery care that encompasses the competencies identified in the 2019 ICM Essential Competencies for Midwifery Practice.¹ Professional midwifery development in Nepal and the Asian region is striving to achieve these goals, which makes the book very relevant to this part of the world.

The book provides a depth of knowledge about how midwifery differs from other caring professions and goes beyond aspects normally addressed in midwifery textbooks. The contents are well organized thematically into six parts. Learning objectives are provided at the beginning of a

chapter, followed by content matter and ends with a conclusion and key messages. This format assists readers to capture the key points. The book is available in hard copy and digital format according to the preference of the readers.

Part I is Midwifery in the Global Scene, with subunits such as midwifery in global health, global maternal and newborn health, contribution of midwifery to global health and the progression from Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) to SDGs. Midwifery is mapped across the world's continents from Sweden, Norway and the Netherlands where midwifery has existed for more than 100 years to identifying the different contexts and systems that shape midwifery practice. The pathways of midwifery development are well described using frameworks such as the ICM Midwifery Services Framework (MSF)² and the Strengthening Quality Midwifery Education for Universal Health Coverage 2030: framework for action.³

Part II includes very important information about midwifery education, regulation and associations. These ICM pillars of midwifery development are interlinked and when development takes place across the three pillars the speed of change is greatly enhanced. There is an impressive amount of content about midwifery education across the globe, including programs that are direct entry, midwifery after nursing and midwifery integrated into nursing. The authors emphasize that programmes must be academically sound, meet ICM Global Standards for Midwifery Education (2021)⁴ and enable students to acquire all the Essential Competencies for Midwifery Practice (ICM 2019). The authors also argue that most Asian countries, including India, Pakistan, Nepal, and Bangladesh, do not currently meet the ICM standards. The education pathways mentioned in Annex 4.1 of the book can help open the eyes of institutional and midwifery leaders who seek to improve midwifery education.

Midwifery regulation is a second important pillar of midwifery. Regulation is based on the nation's laws and should set the standards for entry to the profession and maintenance of practice competency while also being resilient, flexible, adaptive, and responsive to the environment.

The third pillar is midwifery associations who are advocates for midwives and often provide continuing education. Strong professional associations provide leadership and can work together with governments and other stakeholders. The partnership for midwifery education in the 1980s in New Zealand provides a lesson for low-income countries in transforming midwifery education to be separate from nursing education⁵.

Part III is about models of midwifery practice and the challenge of providing high-quality, culturally sensitive, respectful maternity care. The examples highlighted by the authors are appealing and require thought to replicate within different country contexts. The barriers to quality maternity care are well understood in the experiences from Bangladesh, Nepal, and Pakistan.

Part IV introduces the Profession of Midwifery, development of professional identity and the importance of effective leadership including career advancement for midwives. The descriptions of the WHO collaborating centers and ICM standing committees are very informative to readers.

Part V is about midwifery across the globe and focuses on humanitarian and emergency settings. The challenges of motherhood for women who cross borders in the face of many different reasons create challenges for the midwives who are dedicated to caring for them.

Part VI: The final chapter looks forward to 2030 and beyond, presenting an in-depth analysis of the current context of midwifery around the world and makes recommendations for future midwifery policies, practice, education, and research. There is also a useful analysis of risks and benefits of initiatives such as twinning partnerships between country associations, and students' elective placements outside their home country.

The book is a valuable resource for those countries undertaking changes to midwifery education, regulation, and practice. It provides support to leaders for policy level decisions and implementation of change within the profession, regardless of whether midwifery is a new profession or has existed for some time.

Importantly, the book is a very useful resource to young midwifery leaders who are advocating for midwifery as a primary care profession that encompasses compassion, dignity, respect, and continuity of care provided on their own responsibility. The book provides insights, further reading and support for the changes they seek.

CONCLUSION This publication is a fine piece of work written by a team of renowned, experienced authors working for many years in the field of midwifery in prestigious organizations such as the Royal College of Midwives (RCM) UK, Department of Interprofessional Health, Swansea University, UK and the ICM. The book has a wide focus on global midwifery, its milestones and its development including very useful resources to assist countries to adopt and transform midwifery education and practice, based on multiple sources of evidence.

The book also gives direction to midwifery leaders, associations, teachers and students who are dedicated to midwifery development in their region. My recommendation and advice to midwifery leaders, students and teachers is to secure their copies for their personal and official use. A discounted purchase rate for the low-income countries is advisable.

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