



Strengthening Midwifery Globally

ROLE OF THE MIDWIFE IN RESEARCH

Position statement

BACKGROUND

ICM's policy statements on research, adopted in 1990 and 1993, state the belief that 'acceptable standards of midwifery practice, education and management are based on reliable and valid research and accurate evaluation of midwifery practices'.

STATEMENT OF BELIEF

The ICM believes that all women deserve the highest quality, culturally relevant, evidence-based health services. The ICM further believes that all midwives have a role and a responsibility in advancing knowledge within the midwifery profession and the effectiveness of midwifery practice, essential for improvement in the health of all women and childbearing families.

POSITION

All midwives involved in the advancement of knowledge through research should adhere to ICM's most current 'Guidelines for all midwives with regard to the conduct of research'.

In keeping with the belief that research contributes significantly to improvement in the health of women and childbearing families, the ICM recommends that:

- Midwifery education include the theory and practical application of research so that midwives are able to appraise, interpret and critically apply appropriate research findings to ensure their practice is evidence-based
- Midwives, where appropriate, be responsible for promoting and participating in the design, implementation and evaluation of studies within their area of expertise
- Midwives maintain records and create/contribute to national and international databases on the quality, cost, safety and effectiveness of midwifery care
- Research on the childbearing cycle maintain a holistic approach that includes the physiological, psycho-social, cultural and spiritual aspects of the health of women and babies
- Midwives design/participate in studies that support and promote holistic care as well as evaluating the effects of using technology as an intervention during pregnancy and birth
- Midwives understand and adhere to the principles of ethical codes for researchers as stipulated in the Declaration of Helsinki.

GUIDING STATEMENT TO MEMBER ASSOCIATIONS:

Member associations are encouraged to adopt a similar statement or use this one to

promote the role of the midwife in research. Member associations are urged to press for midwifery representation on research and ethics committees and to facilitate individual midwives in joining and contributing to the work of such committees.

RELATED ICM DOCUMENTS

- ICM International Code of Ethics for Midwives (1993)
- ICM Interim Statement on Guidelines for all Midwives with regard to the Conduct of Research (1998)
- Renfrew MJ, Raisler J, Kennedy H, Mudokwenyu-Rawdon C, Prakasamma M. Conducting international research in midwifery: report from an ICM Congress workshop, Vienna, April 2002. *International Midwifery* 2003; **16**: 18-19.

OTHER RELEVANT DOCUMENTS

- World Medical Association. Declaration of Helsinki. Ethical principles for medical research involving human subjects. WMA, 1964, updated 2004.
- ICM guidelines for ethical research collaboration across international and culturally diverse communities. 2005

Adopted at Glasgow Council meeting, 2008

Due for next review 2014