
Position Statement

Appropriate Maternity Services for Normal Pregnancy, Childbirth and the Postnatal Period

Background

Pregnancy, childbirth and the postnatal period are, in the main, normal physiological events. The provision of care for women before, during and after pregnancy should seek to explore and include their views and opinions in relation to pregnancy and childbirth options.

Childbirth is a physical, social, cultural and emotional event and all these factors must be considered in the planning and in the provision of care to women which should take place in their own environment, as close as possible to where they live.

The absence of care by midwives, or the provision of maternity care that is service-centred rather than woman-centred can contribute to the medicalisation of pregnancy and childbirth.

Position

ICM is committed to all women having access to quality care by midwives during pregnancy, childbirth and the postnatal period. ICM supports the right of women and their partners to receive parenting preparation and education, and encourages its members to promote the role of midwives as the most appropriate professional group to provide such preparation.

ICM also works with policy-makers at global level to help ensure that both midwives and women are involved in the planning of maternity services.

ICM believes that

- All women should have access to quality care by midwives that provides support before and during pregnancy, during childbirth and in the postnatal period, irrespective of economic means
- All women and their partners should have access to parenting preparation and education during pregnancy, the content of which should be parent centred rather than service centred
- All women and their partners should be informed of their right to pregnancy and childbirth preparation and education from midwives. This can only occur if midwives share information and collaborate in partnership with women.
- It is incumbent on midwives to promote their role as the providers of midwifery care.
- In each country, those services that seek to serve and meet the needs of childbearing women must be designed and planned in partnership with women

Recommendations

- Member associations are urged to be active in promoting the role and activities of the midwife to the general population.
- Midwives must endeavor to be participants in designing and planning the organisation and delivery of maternity services in partnership with women.

Related ICM Documents

ICM. 2017. Position Statement. Appropriate use of intervention in childbirth.

ICM. 2014. Position Statement. The midwife is the first-choice health care professional for child bearing women.

Other Relevant Documents

Koblinsky et.al. 2016. Quality maternity care for every woman, everywhere: a call to action. *The Lancet*. Vol. 399 No. 1057 P2307-2320. November 2016

[http://thelancet.com/pdfs/journals/lancet/PIIS0140-6736\(16\)31333-2.pdf](http://thelancet.com/pdfs/journals/lancet/PIIS0140-6736(16)31333-2.pdf)

Public Health England: An introduction to maternity services in the NHS. September 2016

<http://www.chimat.org.uk/mslc/about/nhs>

Reidmann G. 2008. *Preparation for parenthood*. Global Library for Women.

Sandall J. The contribution of continuity of midwifery care to high quality maternity care. Report for the Royal Collee of Midwives.

<https://www.rcm.org.uk/sites/default/files/Continuity%20of%20Care%20A5%20Web.pdf>

Adopted at Vienna International Council meeting, 2002

Reviewed at Toronto International Council meeting, 2017

Due for next review 2023