
Position Statement

Care of the Newborn

Background

The care of the newborn is an integral part of the role of the midwife as defined in the Definition of the Midwife¹, and the ICM Essential Competencies for Basic Midwifery Practice². WHO³ estimates that 2.7 million neonatal deaths and 2.6 million stillbirths occur each year. Most of these deaths happen within the first 24 hours of birth, primarily from preventable causes.

Studies have shown that quality care, from a midwife or other qualified professional taking care of the mother and baby, who possesses optimum skills and attitudes, and is able to use effective clinical and non-clinical interventions could save many newborn lives⁴.

Position

ICM underscores that the midwife is responsible for the health and wellbeing of the mother and her baby that are under her care. The midwife must attain and maintain optimum skills and competencies in all areas related to newborn care at minimum as described in the ICM Essential Competencies for Basic Midwifery Practice, and provide high quality, comprehensive care for the healthy infant from birth to two months of age⁵, including:

- Examination of the newborn
- Resuscitation of the newborn
- General care of the newborn and the detection/ management of common conditions
- Identification of complications and referral as appropriate
- Early establishment and continuation of breastfeeding, with family and community education to promote, protect and support breastfeeding

¹ ICM. 2011. Definition of the Midwife

² ICM. XXX Essential Competencies

<http://www.internationalmidwives.org/assets/uploads/documents/CoreDocuments/ICM%20Essential%20Competencies%20for%20Basic%20Midwifery%20Practice%202010,%20revised%202013.pdf>

³ WHO Making every Baby count <http://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/10665/249523/1/9789241511223-eng.pdf?ua=1>

⁴ http://who.int/maternal_child_adolescent/topics/quality-of-care/who-vision-quality-care-for-pregnant-women-and-newborns.pdf?ua=1

⁵ ICM Essential competencies

<http://www.internationalmidwives.org/assets/uploads/documents/CoreDocuments/ICM%20Essential%20Competencies%20for%20Basic%20Midwifery%20Practice%202010,%20revised%202013.pdf>

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- Education of mothers and families in the prevention and management of diseases and other conditions, and the need for immunisation
 - Supporting the process of bonding and attachment between the mother and her newborn

Recommendations

Member associations are urged to:

- Seek to influence the education of midwives to ensure that they have the knowledge, understanding, appropriate skills and attitudes to care for the newborn and effectively manage emergency care
- Encourage midwives, where appropriate, to develop specialised skills in the care of the newborn with special needs
- Seek to influence their governments to ensure midwives can provide newborn care in enabling environments.

Related ICM Documents

ICM. 2011. Core Document. International Definition of the Midwife.

ICM. 2014. International model and philosophy of midwifery care.

ICM. 2017. Position Statement. Breastfeeding

ICM. 2010 Essential Competencies for Basic Midwifery Practice (amended 2013)

Other Relevant Documents

Renfrew, McFadden, Bastos et. al. (2014). Midwifery and quality care: findings from a new evidence-informed framework for maternal and newborn care. *The Lancet*. Sep 20;384 (9948):1129-45

Tuncalp Ö, Were WM, MacLennan C, Oladapo OT, G€ulmezoglu AM, Bahl R, Daelmans B, Mathai M, Say L, Kristensen F, Temmerman M, Bustreo F. (2015). Quality of care for pregnant women and newborns — the WHO vision. *BJOG*, 122:1045–1049. http://who.int/maternal_child_adolescent/topics/quality-of-care/who-vision-quality-care-for-pregnant-women-and-newborns.pdf?ua=1

WHO. (2013). WHO Recommendations on postnatal care of the mother and newborn. (2015). http://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/10665/97603/1/9789241506649_eng.pdf?ua=1

