



Editorial

Special issue of *Midwifery* on ‘The maternity workforce’: Call for papers

The provision of an adequately trained and resourced health workforce is essential if a population's health needs are to be appropriately met. Achieving a number of the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) relies on having a skilled, competent and functional health workforce. Workforce shortages, international migration, fragmented health systems, recruitment and retention issues and changing roles are just some of the areas that affect the health workforce globally. Maternity care is not exempt from these challenges.

Midwifery shortages are seen in almost every country. Other related issues include the migration of trained health workers (midwives and doctors) from low income to middle and high income countries and problems around recruitment and retention of skilled birth attendants in urban and rural areas across the globe. Thus there are some remarkably similar issues between low and high income countries around health worker shortages as well as startlingly different challenges in relation to the migration and retention of staff.

Greater emphasis is needed in order to plan effectively for the future of the midwifery profession, maternity health professionals and the health system in general. Other health professions are facing similar challenges to the nursing and midwifery workforce and we may be able to learn lessons from other disciplines and areas.

Midwifery is a key academic research journal in the field of midwifery and maternity care, and will publish a special issue on the maternity workforce to coincide with the International Confederation of Midwives (ICM) conference in Durban, South Africa in June 2011. We are inviting submissions to this Special Issue.

We are keen to receive a range of papers that examine the maternity workforce from different angles and at different levels. Papers from a micro,

a meso and macro perspective and from a range of disciplines will be welcomed. These may include health systems analysis of evidence around strategies to strengthen midwifery, evidence between midwifery staffing and outcomes, organisational studies on leadership, sociological studies of professionalisation and boundary work.

We are interested in papers that explore strategies to address workforce shortages, at a national and local level. We would encourage the submission of papers around skill mix and substitution between the midwifery workforce and the medical workforce, but also between midwives and maternity care assistants. We would particularly welcome papers that investigate the relationship between maternity workforce, quality, safety and productivity.

The deadline for submitting paper for this Special Issue is 15 September 2010. Papers will be peer-reviewed following the normal review process at *Midwifery*.

Edwin van Teijlingen, MA, MEd, PhD
*Centre for Midwifery, Maternal & Perinatal Health,
School of Health & Social Care, Bournemouth
University, Bournemouth, UK*

Caroline Homer, PhD, MScMed(-ClinEpi), MN, RM
*Centre for Midwifery, Child and Family Health,
Faculty of Nursing, Midwifery and Health,
University of Technology, Sydney, Australia*

Jane Sandall, PhD, MSc, BSc, RM, HV, RN
*Department of Primary Care and Public Health
Sciences, King's College London School of
Medicine, Floor 7, Capital House, 42
Weston St, London SE1 3QD, UK
E-mail address: jane.sandall@kcl.ac.uk*