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Midwifery

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Announcement

Beyond the numbers: The contribution of midwives to building a better future for women and children. A Special Issue of Midwifery

The Millennium Development Goals (MDG) are due to be achieved in 2015, although there will be considerable challenges for many countries to meet the goals. *Countdown to 2015* is a global movement to track, stimulate and support country progress towards achieving the MDGs related to improving maternal and child health. The fourth report of *Countdown* published in 2012, shows that progress has been much slower, and inequities in coverage much wider for skilled attendants at birth and other interventions that require a strong health system.

The State of the World's Midwifery 2011 – the first report of its kind – took stock of the practice in 58 countries with high rates of maternal, fetal and newborn mortality. There are a disproportionate number of deaths in these countries: 91 per cent of the global burden of maternal mortality, 80 per cent of stillbirths and 82 per cent of newborn mortality. The report states that across the 58 countries as many as 3.6 million maternal, fetal and newborn deaths per year could be averted if all women had access to the full package of reproductive, maternal and newborn care. A common feature is the lack of access to quality midwifery services. These are not just issues for low income countries, access and coverage to midwifery care has been raised as an issue in middle and high income countries too. For example not all women in Brazil, Canada, USA have access to midwifery services. Furthermore, high coverage of midwifery does not always mean that care is high quality.

The State of the World's Midwifery identified three key points relating to the status of the midwifery profession and the challenges and barriers that affect midwifery, its development and its effectiveness.

- There are not enough midwives and other workers with midwifery competencies, and the difficulties of access from women's perspectives have not been given enough attention.
- The triad of education, regulation and professional association are not focused enough on how they can contribute to improving the quality and safety of care. In many countries, regulation and regulatory processes are insufficient to protect the public.
- National maternal and newborn policies and services do not often address the centrality of the midwifery workforce, nor the need to improve quality of care, in respect of women's rights. Often mechanisms to measure and improve quality of care are absent.

This special issue of *Midwifery* will address the particular role and contribution of midwives to the quality of care, health and well-being of mothers and newborns in low, medium and high income countries.

It will be published to complement a Special Series on Midwifery planned by The Lancet, to be published in May 2013.

Midwifery would like to invite papers on the following topics in low, medium and especially in high income countries:

- Facilitators and barriers to scaling up services provided by midwives, and the role of key stakeholders and financial systems at global and government policy level.
- The role of education, regulation and professional associations in contributing to strengthening midwifery.
- Access to care issues from women's perspectives.
- The effects of over diagnosis and medicalisation in countries without midwifery coverage and access.

Midwifery is an international journal with an Impact Factor of 1.77 (Thomson Journal Citation Reports 2012), and we are keen to profile national and international perspectives, including the work of doctoral students and early career researchers. We request authors to submit their full manuscripts for consideration to *Midwifery* at <http://ees.elsevier.com/ymidw>. All submissions should meet the usual *Midwifery* author guidelines and standards and will be subject to the usual peer-review process.

All submissions must be with the editorial office by 6 January 2013 to be considered for publication. Please submit online at <http://ees.elsevier.com/ymidw> under 'Special Issue – MDG'.

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