

## LISTEN TO THE MIDWIVES IN LIMPOPO PROVINCE, SOUTH AFRICA: AN EXPLORATIVE STUDY ON MATERNAL CARE

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**Introduction:** To avoid complications of pregnant women during labour and delivery provision of one-to-one delivery care by midwives will improve birth outcomes and this type of care must be promoted at all costs. It was also indicated that in order to have positive maternal and birth outcomes the important social, cultural, economic, personal and professional challenges of midwives need to be prevented. In South Africa there is a need to support midwives as they are experiencing organizational and personal challenges that might affect provision of care during childbirth.

**Methodology:** A qualitative, exploratory and descriptive research design was used. Homogeneous purposive sampling was used to include all midwives who participated in the five focus group interview sessions conducted. Data were collected through focus group interviews. A total of five focus groups interviews which consisted of 9 to 12 participants were conducted one for each district. Data were analysed using 8 steps of Tesch's open coding method where themes and their subthemes have emerged.

**Results:** The results revealed that there is shortage of material and human resources which impedes provision of quality midwifery care, there is lack of autonomy in decision making by managers, existing negative attitudes lead to poor provision of maternity care, there is overcrowding of women in maternity units leading to provision of substandard care, there is lack of knowledge by midwives observed and lack of management support to midwives is lacking and midwives suggested several solutions to these problems.

**Conclusion & Recommendations:** The study revealed that midwives are experiencing several challenges during provision of maternal care. The study recommends that strengthening of maternal health services could assist midwives to provide quality care to women during pregnancy, labour, delivery and puerperium period.

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