

perceived activities of nurse-midwives for labour and delivery in selected hospitals in punjab state, india—an abstract

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The purpose of this study was to investigate the functions of the Nurse-midwives in labour and delivery units of Punjab hospitals in India. A premise of the study is that practicing Nurse-midwives use their midwifery education and skill as indicated by the Indian Nursing Council goals for labour and delivery areas.

Among the Indian Council goals or standards for midwifery were two goals pertaining to labour and delivery ; (1) To develop skill in conducting normal deliveries, (2) To develop ability to recognize deviations from normal and take appropriate action. The other three goals for Nurse-midwifery education in India are ; (1) To develop skill in giving prenatal and post-natal care to mother, (2) To develop ability to participate in maternal and child health activities and (3) To develop an ability to guide and supervise auxiliary midwifery personnel.

Although the two goals for labour and delivery are cited in the 1966 Guide for Schools of Nursing in India, they are not detailed in the guide as to exactly what "skills" or "ability" are required nor as to what are the "normal" or "abnormal" conditions and what action the Nurse-midwife actually performs.

Thus it was important in this study to specify the Nurse-midwifery practice during normal and abnormal process of childbirth. This was done by intensive review of the literature. From the literature review on labour and delivery it became evident that there are five aspects or areas that were pertinent for this study. They were identified as : (1) Identifying signs of normal labour, (2) Functions during first stage of labour, (3) Managing second stage of labour, (4) Managing third stage of labour, and (5) Identifying signs of abnormalities. Thus the Nurse-midwifery performance in this study were related to these five areas as shown.

The activities or functions that were to be performed by a doctor or midwife or other attendant were then labelled as activities and incorporated in the questionnaire form. Thus a total of 61 activities were identified under all five areas.

The questionnaire was administered to all Nurse-midwives in the State of Punjab in the three types of hospitals, namely Civil, Medical College and Maternity Hospitals. The Nurse-midwives responded individually to the questionnaire as to how often and by whom each activity was performed in their hospital ; was the activity performed by registered Nurse-mid-

wife or by Medical doctor or by paramedical personnel (ANMs and Midwives); was the frequency of response: never, rarely, sometimes, usually or always.

The findings from this questionnaire were expected to determine whether the Nurse-midwife sees herself as carrying out the activities in the labour and delivery which fulfill the Indian Nursing Council educational goals. The specifications of the activities in the questionnaire and the responses from Nurse-midwives in Punjab hospitals were to provide a beginning insight into the relationship of activities and the educational goals.

It is clear from the findings that given the opportunity and within conducive environment, the Nurse-Midwives can handle the normal deliveries and recognize the abnormalities. Their activities were limited by such considerations as : (1) institutional policies (Civil Hospitals have a policy of transferring all abnormalities to better equipped hospitals), (2) availability and the need of medical personnel, and (3) economic considerations by the medical practitioners.

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