

RESULTS OF THE PRELIMINARY DIRECT ENTRY MIDWIFERY QUESTIONNAIRE
 (extract from paper - National Midwives Conference Aug '88)
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Early in 1988 the Midwifery Task Force received a substantial grant from the McKenzie Trust Foundation to pursue a feasibility study and curriculum outline for a 3 year Direct Entry Midwifery Course. I was asked to undertake that study and formulate a curriculum.

SUMMARY OF RESPONSES: (preliminary study)

Total responses - 582

87% (506) were unhappy about midwifery training.

80% (465) believe that midwifery is separate from nursing.

94% (550) would like to see midwives recruited to meet special cultural needs

88% (512) agree that an autonomous midwifery profession is essential for a high standard of midwifery care.

96% (561) agree that midwives are essential in the preparation of positive parenting

82% (471) strongly urge the establishment of a 3yr Direct Entry Midwifery Course, to be available in accessible areas

56% (90/161) would apply for a DE course, if available.

54% (81/150) would have done a DE course had it been available
 (275 answered both sections of Q7)

152 participants declared themselves already to be midwives.

Reservations were concerned with cost-effectiveness, RN's wanted assurance that there would be a shortened course, some want to be nurses first.

Some respondents felt too old to undertake a new career but support a DE course. There was concern that DE's would not be as well qualified, which is, of course where the curriculum planning becomes a crucial aspect.

A few stated they were going to undertake midwifery training in another country. There was some reluctance to reply at this early stage of DE. development, and some felt that midwifery is a specialist part of nursing. The feeling that nursing/midwifery is too academic and should return to the hospitals, is still being voiced.

One suggestion was that the first 2yrs of nursing and midwifery are done together and the 3rd yr is separated out, a 4th being available to acquire a double certificate.
Some nurses did not realise that they wanted to become midwives until after their nursing training.

There was one comment that when a student nurse working with midwives, it was NOT a positive experience.
Some felt that promotion restrictions would be too constaining
There were 3 comments that the questionnaire was biased.

There were considerably more supportive comments than negative ones. Sadly many of the respondents against a DE course seemed to think the training would reflect ideas of 20-30 years ago.

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A DE midwifery course would express contemporary thought. Health principles are common to all the health professionals, nursing and midwifery included. There should be no need for antagonism between the two, as that would certainly be detrimental to NZ society, thus I appeal for sound, objective, exploration of the concept and not emotive outbursts.

While I am trying to engage the support of several Technical Institutes to set up a DE Midwifery Course under a clause which allows them to promote innovative courses' which meet the demand of the community, other members of the Midwifery Task Force and Midwives' Section have been working on the political scene and have suggested remits to prominent organisations for the AGM's. Marilyn Waring has been available as our consultant on protocol and parliamentary procedure. We have a lot of support.

Northland Polytechnic has already requested a written proposal for a Direct Entry Course and are at present considering what I have sent to them. I would like to interest others particularly where only basic nursing courses are offered and in areas of the country with the greater needs eg. Bay of Plenty, East Coast, Central NZ., and north, mid and south of the South Island.

Copies of my course proposal outline for initial discussion as sent to Northland are available.

I'd like to close by posing a question.
Subsection 3 of the Nurses Amendment Act 1983 states "Direct Entry Midwives (midwives without any nursing qualification) may be registered as midwives, but due to lack of nursing skills, may only practice midwifery in hospitals."

Is this an admission by Government that midwifery is separate from nursing?