

# PALMERSTON NORTH HOSPITAL

TELEPHONE 69-169

School of Nursing  
PRIVATE BAG,  
PALMERSTON NORTH,  
NEW ZEALAND. 30th July, 1979

The Chairwoman,  
Committee on Women,  
C/- The Treasury,  
WELLINGTON.

Dear Madam,

In answer to your letter to the Principal Tutor, Palmerston North Hospital dated 19th July, 1979 re the request for comments and recommendations on specified sections in the Report of the Conference on "Women and Health".

1. Section III 111/H/49.

In the hospital setting, following approval, suitably trained and experienced Midwives attain considerable autonomy. Their movement into the community is taking place slowly and is impeded because of failure to acknowledge the need for their services by some health professionals. This is best remedied by persistent demand from the user or consumer until such a time that particular needs are met.

The logical development arising from the midwives status in hospital would be to use her as a resource person for training others in the community to form a "back-up" service for the health professionals.

2. Section IV IV/E/89SG.

Considering the previous recommendation, this would be an extension of what was already suggested. Midwife is aware of the mother at risk because of previous contact and opportunity to assess. Some support group or back-up service could be utilized in this way.

3. IV/E/91SG.

Midwives are aware of the lack of knowledge of parenting due to current speed of social change.

Ante-natal and post-natal classes or discussion are vital.

The basis for good parenting is for teaching of human growth and development at an earlier stage, i.e. before ante-natal care. The approach at an earlier stage is best facilitated by combining it with human relations teaching.

We would like to add a comment on Section F dealing with Post-partum Depression, that what is not recognised is the loneliness of women who have been thrust into motherhood with inadequate preparation for the great changes taking place.

We see this as a natural grief and loss process and not a psychiatric problem except in rare cases.

11 AUG 1979

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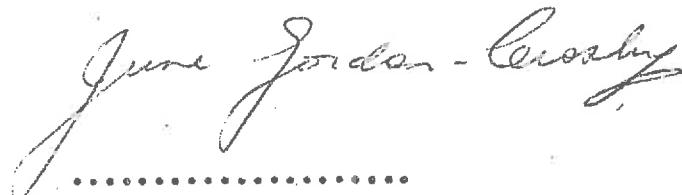
The post-partum period is one of the most important times for individual growth and development and should be utilized. This could be done in three ways:-

1. Continued post-partum groups.
2. Access to trained people who are proficient in counselling.
3. Liaison with all community groups involved e.g. Parents Centre.

What we are suggesting is continuity of care so that mother is assured of ongoing care and support with people with whom she is familiar and has built up a sense of trust.

We see this as one of the areas for urgent research and action, as quality of family life depends on an inter-relationship of all aspects of maternity services. Fragmentation of services and care engenders a sense of confusion and loneliness which adds one problem to another.

Yours faithfully,



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for A. Mitchell R.N. R.M.  
J. Gordon-Crosby R.N. R.M. B.A.(Soc. Sc.)