

Position Statement

Partnership Between Women and Midwives

Background

ICM Midwifery Philosophy and Model of Care is based upon a partnership between women and midwives. Midwifery care takes place in partnership with women and gender diverse people, recognising the right to self-determination, and is respectful, personalised, continuous, and non-authoritarian. The ICM International Code of Ethics for Midwives urges midwives to develop a partnership with individual women in which they actively share information and support women in their right to participate in decisions about their and their newborns' care. Midwives facilitate an environment where women are free to speak for themselves on issues affecting their health and that of their families in their culture/society.

Position

ICM will take every opportunity to work with groups representing the interests of women at international, regional, and national levels to achieve worldwide equitable sexual, reproductive, maternal, newborn and adolescent health outcomes. All initiatives

undertaken to aid the further development of the midwifery profession will be premised on:

- The health care needs of women and newborns,
- The involvement of women in the process of identification of those needs,
- Encouraging midwives to proactively have women, as service users of midwifery care, participate in activities directed at the provision of quality care,
- Secure women-friendly services through midwives who value women's right to make their own decisions,
- Promote the adoption of practice guidelines supporting women's informed choice and the importance of consent-based care.

Recommendations

Member associations are urged to:

- Use this statement for action in their own setting,
- Involve women in their activities.

Other Relevant Documents

- Bradfield, Z. et al. 2018 Midwives being 'with woman': An integrative review. *Women and Birth* Volume 31, Issue 2, Pages 143-15, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.wombi.2017.07.011>
- Yuill, C., McCourt, C., Cheyne, H. et al. Women's experiences of decision-making and informed choice about pregnancy and birth care: a systematic review and meta-synthesis of qualitative research. *BMC Pregnancy and Childbirth* 20, 343 (2020). <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12884-020-03023-6>
- Henshall et al. 2016. A systematic review to examine the evidence regarding discussions by midwives, with women, around their options for where to give birth. *BMC Pregnancy and Childbirth* 16:53 DOI 10.1186/s12884-016-0832-0.

Related ICM Documents

- ICM. 2014. Core Document. International Code of Ethics for Midwives.
- ICM. 2014. Core Document. Philosophy and Model of Midwifery Care.

Adopted at Brisbane International Council meeting, 2005

Revised at Toronto International Council meeting, 2017

Revised at the Virtual Council Meeting 2024

Date for next review 2027