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# MIDWIFERY AND WOMEN'S HEALTH

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## Midwives' experiences of working conditions, perceptions of professional role and attitudes towards mothers in Mozambique

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**Background:** Low- and middle-income countries still have a long way to go to reach the fifth Millennium Development Goal of reducing maternal mortality. Mozambique has accomplished a reduction of maternal mortality since the 1990s but still has among the highest in the world. A key strategy in reducing maternal mortality is to invest in midwifery.

**Aim:** The objective was to explore midwives' perspectives of their working conditions, their professional role, and perceptions of attitudes towards mothers in a low-resource setting.

**Setting:** Midwives in urban, suburban, village and remote areas; working in central, general and rural hospitals as well as health centers and health posts were interviewed in Maputo City, Maputo Province and Gaza Province in Mozambique.

**Method:** The study had a qualitative research design. Nine semi-structured interviews and one follow-up interview were conducted and analyzed with qualitative content analysis.

**Results:** Two main themes were found; commitment/devotion and lack of resources. All informants described empathic care-giving, with deep engagement with the mothers and highly valued working in teams. Lack of resources prevented the midwives from providing care and created frustration and feelings of insufficiency.

**Conclusions:** The midwives' perceptions were that they tried to provide empathic, responsive care on their own within a weak health system which created many difficulties. The enormous potential of the midwives possesses of providing quality care must be valued and nurtured for their competency to be used more effectively.

### Biography

Katja Adolphson is a Junior Physician and passionate about women's right and maternal healthcare. She has conducted research in Mozambique and done clinical postings in India, Israel, Turkey and Tanzania. She has graduated from Uppsala University School of Medicine in 2015 and then she has been working as MD in the Emergency Clinic of the University Hospital of Danderyd in Stockholm, Sweden. She has published her work in the journal Midwifery and is a regular peer review contributor for the same magazine.

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