

Extended Abstract

Is mentoring effective for midwifery students in the clinical area? Midwives perceptions at a provincial hospital in Zimbabwe

Elizabeth Silumba Nee Kasaira

National University of Science and Technology, Zimbabwe

Midwifery is a competency based profession in which midwifery students acquire most of their guided learning in the clinical area, hence the need to ensure optimal mentoring which would promote the acquisition of the ideal clinical skills. Failure to support and prepare midwifery students may affect their ability to deliver the required level of midwifery care. This study purposed at exploring the midwives' perceptions regarding mentoring of midwifery students in the clinical area at Marondera midwifery training institution. A qualitative phenomenological design based on the principles of naturalistic inquiry underpinned this study. The study sample was composed of six recently qualified midwives and ten senior midwives who met the inclusion criteria. Purposive sampling was used to select the sample until saturation was reached. Data were generated using tape-recorded unstructured individual interviews. Colaizzi's thematic analysis was used to synthesize the findings, and data were presented using the emergent themes. The results generally revealed that mentorship was perceived as an important supportive, teaching and learning strategy. Four themes emerged from the interview data, namely; gross inconsistencies in the mentoring of midwifery students, lack of standardized procedures, poor communication between the school of midwifery and the clinical area and lack of ideal infrastructure which hinder effective mentoring of midwifery students. The results gave rise to the adaptation of Bandura's social learning theory which was used as an explanatory framework for understanding the study's findings. Several recommendations were proffered; allocating individual mentors to midwifery students, training programs specifically for mentors, benchmarking to improve training of midwifery students and standardization of mentoring guidelines. Communication between the school of midwifery and the clinical area must improve and there is need for creation of an active national midwifery education board which oversees midwifery teaching and mentoring. The authorities should be committed to the provision of adequate resources to enhance mentorship of midwifery. Further research should focus on identification of where midwives differ and sources of their differences, and then establish solutions to the challenges. Midwifery nursing research is still a grey area for scores of students in the globe. The contemporary situation clearly demonstrates a considerable gap in research among nurses internationally. Nursing professionals seem to be ambivalent about the contribution of research in their practice. Despite positive influences of research on service delivery transformation, nurses' engagement in evidence-based practices (EBP) still lack among many practitioners. To date, no significant efforts internationally were done to unpack midwifery nursing students' perceptions of research. Continuous nursing research is the gold standard for midwifery nursing to sustainably deliver quality care. The quality care given by nurse midwives is determined by rigorous inquiry and application of knowledge acquired through continuous research. Continuous research is considered key because it translates to improved and efficient patient care. If research is not given prominence in midwifery practice, sound judgment and decision making are relegated to their minute levels in nursing. Researchers in their submission attested that new evidence based culture is based on sound empirical evidence