



Position statement: Basic and ongoing education of midwives in South Africa

Background

Midwifery is a profession in its own right, with a unique body of knowledge, skills, and behaviours as well as shared competencies and knowledge with other health disciplines. Much of the knowledge and competencies are based on evidence resulting from research carried out by midwives and others. Therefore, midwifery knowledge and competencies are consistently reviewed and revised based on the findings from new and high-quality studies.

Position

- SOMSA will work to ensure that midwives lead and define midwifery education and practice within the context and needs of South Africa.
- SOMSA believes that midwifery competence can be achieved through multiple formal educational pathways based on the SOMSA Global Standards for Midwifery Education and incorporating the Essential Competencies for Midwifery Practice (2019); that all midwifery educators should be competent in theory and practice and that learning is ongoing to ensure continuous professional development.
- SOMSA further believes that it is the ethical duty of each midwife to remain safe and current in practice at all times. Therefore, continuing education should be compulsory for all practicing midwives.

In accordance with the above SOMSA:

- Recognises and requires that competencies for the practice of midwifery, based upon the ICM Essential Competencies for Basic Midwifery Practice (2019), are defined locally, keeping with the needs of individuals/families and the area of the world where the midwife is practicing.
- Supports and requires that these essential competencies for midwifery practice be included in the design and implementation of midwifery curricula.
- Mandates that a standardized and uniform curriculum should be developed for South Africa to provide the opportunity for all students to acquire the knowledge, skills and professional behaviours necessary to enable the midwife to practice to the full extent of her role as identified within the ICM Definition of the Midwife (2011).
- Recognises and supports multiple routes of entry into midwifery that result in a variety of educational programmes, based on the ICM Global Standards for Midwifery Education (2021).

- Recognises and requires that midwifery educators be safe and current in their theory and clinical practice according to ICM standards and WHO recommendations.
- Recognises the vital role that continuing education plays in the safety and currency of an individual's midwifery practice. It support continuing education updates in keeping with the ethical mandate for advancement of midwifery knowledge and practice as stated in the International Code of Ethics for Midwives (2014).
- Recognises that, to strengthen and advance the role of the midwife, a system of continuing professional development should be regulated and in place.

Recommendations

SOMSA support basic and on-going midwifery education according to ICM standards and competencies. SOMSA support the need to negotiate the control of midwifery education, standardization of curricula to meet the global standards of midwifery education.

Related Documents and Sources

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