The challenge of a meaningful job

A qualitative study of how caseload midwifery is constituted and experienced by Danish midwives

HIGHLIGHTS

• The benefits of caseload midwifery outweigh the disadvantages e.g. to private life
• It is possible to create the feeling of working in a self-governing model within the public hospital
• The supporting partnership with a colleague results in peer-learning and development
• Caseload midwifery can include women at all risks
• This model is workable for midwives with small children
• The midwives make great efforts to include and recognize also very “challenging” families

OBJECTIVE

To investigate how midwives experience caseload midwifery and what constitutes this model of care seen from the midwives’ perspective.

DESIGN AND SETTINGS

A hermeneutic-phenomenological study using an ethnographically inspired methodology: field study and interviews.

Within caseload midwifery in Northern Denmark

PARTICIPANTS

Thirteen midwives working in caseloads

FINDINGS

A high degree of job satisfaction counterbalance the obligation and pressure to do good and the disadvantages on the midwives’ private lives.

Working in caseload midwifery creates a feeling of working in a self-governing model within the public hospital without losing the technological benefits of a modern hospital.

Caseload midwifery may provide an extra chance of being recognized women who have a challenging personality or attitude towards others.

KEY CONCLUSIONS

Caseload midwifery is a work form with an embedded and inevitable commitment and obligation that brings forward the midwife’s desire to do her utmost and in return get appreciation, social recognition and a meaningful job with great job satisfaction.

There is a balance between the advantages according to the meaningful job and the disadvantages according to private life, but the midwives working in caseloads found benefits to outweigh disadvantages.

IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE

In expanding this model of care it is necessary to understand that the midwives’ private lives need to be prepared for this work form and that the number of women per full time midwife, as well as the success rate have to be surveilled as the job-satisfaction is depended on the midwives capability of still fulfilling expectations.

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