



International Confederation of Midwives

Position Statement 6.1.d: Keeping Birth Normal

ICM Council Meeting, held together with Congress
Glasgow, 28-31 May 2008

Name of proposing Member Association: Southern Europe Region of ICM.
Title of proposed Discussion Item: Keeping Birth Normal
Background for the Discussion: Southern Europe Region Midwifery Associations propose an appropriate, effective, usable and accessible position statement on keeping the birth normal. Midwives' practice must be based on evidence based knowledge to improve the quality and outcomes of care. Keeping Birth Normal is an area of ICM Strategy of: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Issues of women's global health- Midwifery professional issues- Midwifery educational issues (evidence-based education)- Governments health policy- NGO's, alliances with women, parents to support normal birth- Teaching of reproductive health (and normal birth) from the school age
Statement of Belief: Midwives declare they are advocates of normal childbirth. They can demonstrate and support the advantages of normal birth but women's decisions are affected by socio-economic factors and health care systems. Some of the above influential factors are: <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Women are not enough informed of normal childbirth processes and are frightened to trust their bodies and natural childbirth mechanisms.2. Midwives are trained in hospital settings with a lot technology and may lack confidence in staying with nature's processes without any intervention. ICM supports the following definition of normal childbirth: Is a unique dynamic process in which foetal and maternal physiologies and psychosocial contexts interact. Normal birth is where the woman commences, continues and complete labour with the infant being born spontaneously at term, cephalic (with the goal of mother and baby being well) without any surgical, medical, or pharmaceutical intervention.
Proposed text of statement: This position statement aims at supporting Normal Childbirth in our countries since for the majority of women pregnancy and childbirth are physiological life events. Women should have access to midwifery-led care, one-to-one support, including a home birth, immersion in water, and interdisciplinary working. Midwifery Associations must influence and work in collaboration with the Ministry of Health and other Organizations. Note: the term childbirth encompasses pregnancy, birth and postnatal period.
Guiding Statement for Member Associations, or Board, if applicable: All member associations will work in partnership with women as their advocate through the childbirth period and neonatal care: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- To promote Normal Childbirth within the maternity units.- To enrich the midwives' education in order to enhance skills and competencies in normal childbirth.- To organize educational courses to enhance midwives to practice Normal Childbirth.- To increase midwives' awareness of the benefits of normal childbirth in terms of maternal and perinatal health.- To establish and use health care indicators and evaluate the results of midwives' practice on normal childbirth.- To confirm midwives as the primary care giver and expert in normal childbirth.- To do research to demonstrate the effectiveness of midwifery care on normal childbirth. Midwives should participate in the strategic planning and decision making process, therefore to influence governments for funding adequately maternity services. Governments, politicians, and decision makers should support midwives and normal birth.
Supporting references: ICM / FIGO / WHO (1993 / 2005) Definition of the Midwife. ICM (1999) Vision Statement. ICM (2002) Essential Competencies for Midwifery Practice. ICM (2006) Midwifery Associations and their Role in Keeping Birth Normal. WHO, ICM and FIGO (2004) Joint Statement: Making Pregnancy Safer: The Critical Role of the Skilled Attendant. Maternity Care Working Party, Consensus statement-Making normal birth a reality

Motion: That Council adopt Position Statement 6.1.d.

Proposed by: Southern Europe Region

Seconded by:

AEM - Asociación Española de Matronas

APEO - Associação Portuguesa dos Enfermeiros Obstetras

CNMA - Cyprus Nurses and Midwives Association

FAME - Federación de Asociaciones de Matronas de España

FNCO - National Federation of Midwives

HMA - Hellenic Midwives' Association

MAM - Midwives Association Malta

Motion Result: For: 96.4% Against: 2.2% Abstentions: 1.4%

The Position Statement as viewed on screen and reedited in real time by Elizabeth Duff has been adopted.