

Do Midwives Represent Risk of “Stealing” Patients from OBG Physicians? Not in Low and Middle-income System

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Abstract:

Several new paramedical disciplines has been introduced in new EU member states within the last 20 years, such as midwifery, nursing, physiotherapy, dental technician etc. and concern was observed in discussions if those disciplines are not replacing qualified physicians such as OBG, neurologists, dental surgeons. Another concern was published when critically assessing their curricula during national accreditation processes.

Global Health Environment

Starting with midwifery, more than half of WHO member states had midwifery organically included in their health system. After World War II, Europe, Ukraine and Russia have had excellent experience with so called *Feldsherr-Acoucher Specialists* originating from French and German military experience in late 18th and 19th centuries. Those specialists were active and competent, especially in areas of weak healthcare infrastructure and were more than capable in deliveries countrywide in the last 70 years. The study programs still exist in many Eastern European universities.

Outside of Europe, apart of Latin America, midwifery in Africa and Asia is traditionally a capable discipline to achieve at least two of the millennium goals: to decrease neonatal and decrease maternal mortality in developing countries.

For example, in Ethiopia, every midwife is able to perform caesarean section after 3 years of training. Within last 50 years, this second highest population country in Africa has substantially decreased maternal and neonatal mortality.

Conclusions

Jealousy of physicians including OBG doctors in the EU is understandable due to historic and logistic fact of sufficient number of doctors, but is no longer tolerable. First, we can still see countries in Europe and outside of the EU e.g. Bosnia & Herzegovina, Moldova, Albania, approaching the EU but having unacceptable high neonatal and maternal mortality rates. Second, due to low numbers of OBG specialists in Sub-Saharan Africa and Southeast Asia, midwifery professionals are our only hope in the everlasting battle against neonatal and maternal mortality worldwide.

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