



Awareness and Significance of Teamwork in Midwifery Practice among Midwives in Tertiary and Secondary Healthcare Facilities in Port-Harcourt, Nigeria

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Authors' contributions

This work was carried out in collaboration between both authors. Both authors read and approved the final manuscript.

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ABSTRACT

A better understanding of the processes of collaboration between midwives who work in the birthing centers, and hospital-based obstetricians, family physicians and nurses may promote cooperation among professionals providing maternity care in both institutions. The study investigated the awareness and significance of teamwork in midwifery practice among midwives in tertiary and secondary healthcare facilities in Port Harcourt. Three research questions were raised and the study adopted the cross-sectional descriptive design. The target population consists of 100 midwives in the University of Port Harcourt teaching hospital and 20 midwives in Obio Cottage hospital. The sample size of 120 was derived from Taro Yamane's formula. The instrument for data

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collection was a self-designed questionnaire. The data collated were analysed using frequency count and simple percentage, and chi-square. The findings revealed that the midwives have good knowledge on the significance of teamwork with 75.4%, 1.75 ± 0.434 mean score and standard deviation respectively. The study also found that the healthcare facilities had a significant statistical relationship (p -value = 0.041). The finding also indicated midwives had attended no or few seminars on the awareness of teamwork with a mean score of 1.92 and standard deviation of 0.072. The study recommended that workshops and training should be made available to midwives in the secondary and tertiary hospital. The study concluded that the entire potential of teamwork will only be realized if the hospital management, head of nurses and midwives encouraged and continuously improve the standard of awareness of teamwork practice among midwives in the health facilities.

Keywords: Teamwork; midwives; practice; significance; awareness.

1. INTRODUCTION

Teamwork in healthcare settings is essential for providing high quality patient care and ensuring positive outcomes. In today's complex healthcare environment, where medical treatments are multifaceted and patients often have various healthcare needs, collaboration and communication among healthcare professionals are paramount. Here are several reasons why teamwork is crucial in healthcare [1].

Teamwork allows healthcare professionals from different disciplines (midwives, doctors, nurses, pharmacists, therapists, etc.) to pool their expertise and provide comprehensive care. Each team member contributes their specialized knowledge, leading to a more holistic approach to patient treatment and management [2]. Effective teamwork reduces the likelihood of errors. When healthcare professionals work together, they can crosscheck each other's decisions, prescriptions, and procedures, minimizing the risk of mistakes that could harm patients. Teamwork encourages brainstorming and diverse perspectives. When faced with complex medical cases or challenging situations, a team of professionals can collectively analyze the problem, leading to innovative solutions and better outcomes for patients [3,4].

Healthcare professionals who work in supportive, collaborative teams often experience higher job satisfaction [5]. A positive team environment fosters a sense of camaraderie, mutual respect, and shared goals, which can lead to increased job motivation and fulfillment. In healthcare settings, especially for chronic or long-term conditions, teamwork ensures continuity of care. Different team members can seamlessly take over patient management, ensuring that there are no gaps in treatment or information transfer, even when shifts change. Team-based care puts

the patient at the center of the healthcare experience [5,6,7]. By involving patients in discussions and decisions about their care, healthcare teams can tailor treatments to individual needs and preferences, promoting patient satisfaction and compliance. Teamwork in healthcare is the cornerstone of efficient, safe, and patient-focused medical practice. It maximizes the collective expertise of healthcare professionals, leading to improved patient outcomes and a higher quality of care [2,8-11].

In critical situations, quick and informed decisions are essential. Teamwork ensures that information is shared rapidly among team members, allowing for timely decision-making. This is crucial in emergencies where seconds can make a significant difference in the outcome for both the mother and the baby. Midwifery teams facilitate seamless continuity of care [12-15]. During labor, different midwives can rotate shifts, ensuring that there is always a fresh and alert professional attending to the mother. This continuity ensures consistent monitoring and care, leading to better outcomes [12].

Midwives face various challenges when practicing effective teamwork in healthcare settings. These challenges can impact the quality of care provided to mothers and newborns. Limited communication channels or ineffective communication between team members can lead to misunderstandings, misinterpretations, and mistakes in patient care. Language barriers, hierarchy, or lack of standardized communication protocols can hinder effective teamwork. Midwives often work in environments with high patient loads and limited staffing. Heavy workloads can affect the time available for team communication and collaboration. Staff shortages may lead to burnout, stress, and decreased morale, hindering effective teamwork efforts.

Collaboration between different healthcare professionals, such as midwives, nurses, obstetricians, and support staff, is essential. However, siloed working cultures and lack of inter-professional education can create barriers to effective collaboration, leading to fragmented care. Unclear delineation of roles and responsibilities within the team can cause confusion. Midwives need to understand their roles as well as the roles of other team members to work cohesively. Lack of role clarity can lead to duplication of efforts or crucial tasks being overlooked. Implementing new teamwork strategies or adopting collaborative technologies can face resistance from established practices. Midwives may be resistant to changes in workflow, especially if they perceive these changes as disrupting their routines or adding extra workload [5,16-18].

Hierarchical structures within healthcare organizations can discourage open communication and feedback. Subordinates might hesitate to voice concerns or suggestions to superiors, inhibiting the flow of vital information within the team. Inadequate training in teamwork skills and lack of continuing education opportunities can hinder midwives' ability to collaborate effectively. Continuous training and workshops are essential to develop communication, leadership, and conflict resolution skills. Cultural differences and diverse backgrounds among team members can lead to misunderstandings. It's crucial to foster cultural competence within the team to ensure respectful communication and understanding of diverse perspectives. Midwives may encounter ethical dilemmas, such as respecting patients' autonomy while adhering to medical guidelines.

Resolving these dilemmas often requires collaborative decision making, which can be challenging, especially if team members have different ethical viewpoints. Dealing with emotionally charged situations, such as stillbirths or complicated deliveries, can be emotionally taxing for midwives. Emotional stress can affect communication and teamwork, making it essential to provide psychological support to team members. Addressing these challenges requires a multifaceted approach, including improved communication training, promoting a culture of collaboration, providing adequate staffing and resources, and fostering a supportive work environment that values the contributions of every team member [2].

1.1 Aims and Objective of the Study

The study aimed to investigate and understand the level of awareness among midwives regarding the importance of teamwork in midwifery practice. The specific objectives of the study were to:

1. determine the awareness of teamwork in midwifery practice in secondary care facilities and tertiary care facilities.
2. determine the relationship between awareness and significance of teamwork in midwifery practice in secondary and tertiary health facilities.

1.2 Research Hypothesis

1. There is no significant difference in the awareness of teamwork in midwifery practice among midwives in secondary healthcare facilities.
2. There is no significant difference in awareness of teamwork in midwifery practice among midwives in tertiary facilities among midwives in the tertiary care facilities.

2. METHODOLOGY

A descriptive non-experimental quantitative research design was used for this study. The target population for this study was 100 midwives in the University of Port Harcourt Teaching Hospital and 20 midwives in Obio Cottage Hospital, making a total of 120. The census sampling technique was used, meaning the 120 midwives of both hospitals were the respondents. Self-structure questionnaire titled "Awareness and Significance of Teamwork in Midwifery Practice Among Midwives in Tertiary and Secondary Healthcare Facilities" entry of 16 items in 3 units of Unit I: measuring the awareness of teamwork in midwifery practice in secondary care facilities and tertiary care facilities in Port Harcourt. Unit II: Association of the inter-relationship between awareness and significance of teamwork in midwifery practice in secondary and tertiary health facilities in Port Harcourt. Unit III: Association of the interrelationship between awareness and the demography of teamwork in midwifery practice in secondary healthcare and tertiary facilities in Port Harcourt. All in like Likert scale of Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree and Strongly Disagree. The researcher personally administered the instrument to all the respondents at different

times in their duty post and waited to retrieve back all 120 instruments for analysis. Data collected were analyzed using statistical software package for the social science (SPSS, Version 25.0). Data were presented in tables, frequency and inferential statistics. The association between the demographic variables was tested with chi-square using 95% level of significance ($p=0.05$).

Table 1. Profession of the respondents

		Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Nurse	40	41.0	41.0
	Midwife	80	59.0	100.0
	Total	120	100.0	

3. RESULTS

3.1 Profession of the Respondents

Table 1 above indicates the profession of the respondents, 40 respondents representing 41.0% were nurses and 80 of the respondents representing 59.0% were midwives in University of Port Harcourt Teaching Hospital and Obio Cottage Hospital.

Table 2. Gender of respondents

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Male	10	11.5
	female	110	88.5
	Total	120	100.0

In Table 2 above, 10 (11.5%) of the respondents were male while majority of 110 respondents representing 88.5% were female. This indicates majority of the midwives and nurses practicing in the University of Port Harcourt Teaching Hospital and Obio Cottage Hospital were female.

Table 3. Age group of respondents

Age Group	Frequency	
Valid	18-25	18
	26-33	54
	34-41	6
	42-49	32
	above 50	5
	Total	120

In Table 3 above, 18 (14.85) were aged 18-25 years, 44.3% were aged 26-33 years, 4.9% were aged 34-41 years, 26.2% were aged 42-49 years, and 9.8% were aged above 50 years. This result indicates that majority of the respondents

were within 26-33 years old followed by 41-49 years.

Table 4. Marital status of respondents

Variables	Frequency	
Valid	Married	84
	Single	24
	Separated	6
	widow/widower	6
	Total	120

Table 4 above shows the marital status of the respondents, 43 respondents representing 70.5% were married, 24 (19.7%) were single, 4.9% were separated and 4.9% were widow/widower. The results indicate that majority of the respondents were married.

Table 5. Educational qualification

		Frequency
Valid	ND/HND	60
	BSN	56
	MSc/PhD	4
	Total	120

In Table 5 above, 30 respondents representing 49.2% were ND/HND in Midwifery/nursing, 28 respondents representing 45.9% BSN and 4.9% had MSc/PhD.

Table 6. Year of service

Variables	Frequency	
Valid	less than 10	44
	10years less than 20	54
	20years above	22
	Total	120

In Table 6 above, 44 respondents representing 36.1% had work less than 10-years working experience, 45.9% had worked for over 10years but less than 20years, and 18.0% has more than 20 years working experience. The results indicate that, most of the respondents had worked for over 10years in the both healthcare facilities.

3.2 Answer to Research Questions

Table 7 indicate the extent of awareness of teamwork among midwives in secondary and Tertiary Facilities, five item address research questions 1, UPTH had a result ranging from 1.84±1.94 and Obio Cottage Hospital 1.60±1.90 indicating a good level of awareness of teamwork among midwives which represent 75.4% in the both healthcare facilities.

Table 7. Extent of the awareness of teamwork among midwives in secondary and Tertiary Facilities

S/N	Questions	Facilities	Mean	Std	Number	Decision
1.	Teamwork allows healthcare professionals from different disciplines to provide comprehensive care	UPTH	1.90	0.300	102	High
		Cottage	1.80	0.422	10	High
2.	In my facility I have a team mate	UPTH	1.90	0.300	102	High
		Cottage	1.80	0.422	10	High
3	There is supportive and collaborative work in my facility	UPTH	1.84	0.367	102	High
		Cottage	1.60	0.1206	10	High
4	Have attended seminars on the awareness of teamwork	UPTH	1.94	0.272	102	High
		Cottage	1.90	0.316	10	High
5	As a Midwife I understand my roles as well as the roles of other team members to work cohesively.	UPTH	1.90	0.300	102	High
		Cottage	1.90	0.316	10	High
Level of awareness		Freq	%			
Poor level		30	24.6%			
Good level		90	75.4%			
Total		120	100%			

Mean criterion: $2+1/2=1.5$; researcher's Desk (2024)

Table 8. Relationship between awareness and significance of teamwork in secondary and tertiary healthcare facilities in Port Harcourt

S/N	Questions	Facilities	Mean	Std	Number	Decision
1.	There is effective collaboration between awareness and significance of teamwork in secondary healthcare facilities	UPTH	2.98	0.648	102	Accept
		Cottage	2.70	0.823	10	Accept
2.	There is significance relationship between awareness and teamwork	UPTH	3.41	0.920	102	Accept
		Cottage	3.10	0.994	10	Accept
3	don't think awareness and teamwork has any relationship	UPTH	2.04	1.076	102	Reject
		Cottage	2.40	0.966	10	Reject
4	Awareness have no positive effects on teamwork in tertiary hospital	UPTH	2.06	0.732	102	Reject
		Cottage	1.90	0.568	10	Reject
5	the awareness of teamwork's significance provides insights into how to optimize healthcare delivery processes.	UPTH	3.12	0.711	102	Accept
		Cottage	2.70	0.823	10	Accept

Mean criterion: $4+3+2+1/4 = 2.5$; Researcher's Desk (2024)

Table 8 presents relationship between awareness and significance of teamwork in secondary and tertiary healthcare facilities in Port Harcourt. Item 1, 2, and 5 were accepted with a mean score of 2.98, 3.41, 3.12 and 2.70, 3.10, 2.70 respectively in University of Port Harcourt Teaching Hospital and Obio Cottage Hospital. This indicates that there is a relationship between awareness and significance of teamwork in secondary and tertiary healthcare facilities in Port Harcourt. Moreover, item 3 and 5 were rejected with a low mean score of 2.04, 2.06 and 2.40, 1.90 respectively in UPTH and Obio Cottage hospital.

4. DISCUSSION

The extent of awareness of teamwork among midwives in secondary and tertiary care facilities was noted in Table 7. It was noted that midwives have good level of awareness of teamwork with 75.4%. It was also noted that teamwork allows healthcare professionals from different disciplines to provide comprehensive care in UPTH (1.90 ± 0.300) and Obio Cottage (1.80 ± 0.422). These findings are in line with the work of Rhona (2020) which described that good quality midwifery care saved the lives of women and babies. Continuity of midwife carer (CMC), a key component of good quality midwifery care,

results in better clinical outcomes, higher care satisfaction and enhanced caregiver experience.

It was also noted that there was a supportive and collaborative work in UPTH (1.84 ± 0.367) and Cottage Hospital (1.60 ± 0.1206). This finding is in line with work of Salman (2018) who concluded that healthcare professionals who work in supportive, collaborative teams often experience higher job satisfaction. A positive team environment fosters a sense of camaraderie, mutual respect, and shared goals, which can lead to increased job motivation and fulfillment. It was also noted that many midwives had not attended seminars on the awareness of teamwork in UPTH (1.94 ± 0.272) and Obio Cottage Hospital (1.94 ± 0.316). This finding was noted from the field research work.

It was noted that there was an effective collaboration between awareness and significance of teamwork in secondary healthcare facilities (2.70 ± 0.823) and tertiary health care (2.98 ± 0.648). This finding is in conformity with the work of Michael et al. (2019) that concluded that high quality care suggests that few industries match the scale of health care. In the United States alone, an estimated 85% of the population has at least 1 health care encounter annually and at least one quarter of these people experience 4 to 9 encounters annually. A single visit requires collaboration among a multidisciplinary group of clinicians and midwives. Midwives often work in collaboration with obstetricians, nurses, and other healthcare professionals

It was also noted that there was significance relationship between awareness and teamwork in secondary hospital (3.10 ± 0.994) and tertiary hospital (3.41 ± 0.929). It was also noted that the awareness of teamwork's significance provides insights into how to optimize healthcare delivery processes in secondary hospital (2.70 ± 0.823) and tertiary hospital (3.12 ± 0.711). These findings are in line with the work of Rhona (2020) which describes that good quality midwifery care saves the lives of women and babies. Continuity of midwife carer (CMC), a key component of good quality midwifery care, results in better clinical outcomes, higher care satisfaction and enhanced caregiver experience.

5. CONCLUSION

Today, teamwork does not only play a vital role in the hospital, but in all organizations. For a

quality healthcare delivery, there must be a collaborative teamwork among the healthcare providers and most especially the midwives in any healthcare facilities. As noted above that awareness of teamwork's significance provides insights into how to optimize healthcare delivery processes in secondary hospital (2.70 ± 0.823) and tertiary hospital (3.12 ± 0.711). Therefore, teamwork and its awareness should be made effective in the health facilities.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the results of this study, the following recommendations were suggested:

1. There should be training and retraining on awareness of teamwork to midwives in the University of Port Harcourt Teaching Hospital and Obio Cottage Hospital.
2. Midwives should work in collaboration with other clinicians and allied health care workers in University of Port Harcourt Teaching Hospital and Obio Cottage Hospital.
3. Implementation of awareness programs to promote quality teamwork in tertiary and secondary health facilities.
4. Practical sections on teamwork and public relationship should be made available to not only midwives and but to other healthcare providers in the secondary and tertiary healthcare facilities.
5. Management of the University of Port Harcourt Teaching Hospital and Obio Cottage Hospital should pay more attentions to the midwives, orient them about the benefits of teamwork in the health care system, provide them with frequent practical training sessions to improve their communication skills.
6. Incentives should be made available to midwives to promote and maintain their level of awareness and teamwork in the Secondary and Tertiary Hospital.

DISCLAIMER (ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE)

Author(s) hereby declare that NO generative AI technologies such as Large Language Models (ChatGPT, COPILOT, etc) and text-to-image generators have been used during writing or editing of manuscripts.

CONSENT AND ETHICAL APPROVAL

It is not applicable.

COMPETING INTERESTS

Authors have declared that no competing interests exist.

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