

助產士的
專業操守及職務

*Conduct and
Practice
in Midwifery*

香港助產士管理局

Midwives Council of Hong Kong

Conduct and Practice in Midwifery

CONTENTS

PREAMBLE	2
DEFINITION OF MIDWIFE	3
THE PHILOSOPHY OF MIDWIFERY.....	4
SCOPE OF PRACTICE	6
CODE OF CONDUCT	7
To the clients	
To the profession	
To the community	
With other healthcare professionals	
To herself	
CODE OF PRACTICE	9
Autonomy	
Accountability	
Documentation	
Communication	
Confidentiality	
SOME IMPORTANT LEGAL OBLIGATIONS	11
GLOSSARY OF TERMS	12
APPENDIX.....	13
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	14

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PREAMBLE

The Midwives Council of Hong Kong is the regulatory body of the midwifery profession. Its function is to carry out the statutory duties assigned to it by the Midwives Registration Ordinance, Cap. 162. Such duties include the registration of midwives and the discipline and regulation of the profession.

In determining whether an application for registration as a midwife should be approved, or whether a registered midwife should be allowed to continue to practise midwifery, a relevant factor to be taken into account is whether the applicant has been guilty of unprofessional conduct (section 8(3)).

Unprofessional conduct is defined under section 10(3) to mean an act or omission which could be reasonably regarded as disgraceful or dishonourable by registered midwives of good repute and competency.

The objective of this booklet is to provide general guidance to registered midwives on the conduct and practice of midwifery.

Note

In this booklet, unless the context otherwise requires, words and expressions importing the feminine gender include the masculine gender, and words and expressions importing the masculine gender include the feminine gender.

Legislation referred to in this booklet is up to date as at 1st January 2000. Sections of the Midwives Registration Ordinance quoted herein are extracted in the Appendix.

DEFINITION OF MIDWIFE

A midwife is a person who, having regularly been admitted to a midwifery educational programme that is duly recognized in Hong Kong, has successfully completed a prescribed course of studies in midwifery, passed the assessment as stipulated by the Midwives Council of Hong Kong, and has acquired the requisite qualifications to be registered and/or legally registered to practise midwifery.

Adapted from the International Confederation of Midwives, 1992

Note

The term “midwife” is not defined in the Midwives Registration Ordinance. The definition adapted from the International Confederation of Midwives is used as a reference only.

The philosophy is based on the values relating both to the woman and her family as recipients of care and to the midwife as a provider of care.

Woman

Every woman is a unique, holistic being who warrants fundamental respect for the integrity of the person. She has her own dignity, rights and self-care abilities relating to her health concern. The woman as a mother is the centre of midwifery care. As childbirth is a characteristic physiological event, an expectant mother tends to look forward to a positive birth experience in a safe and friendly environment.

Family

The family is the basic unit of society. It forms a social network that acts as a support system for its members.

The structure and culture of the family can influence the attitudes, values, and health behaviour of the childbearing family. Simultaneously, changing economic factors, life styles, values and childbirth practice can affect the family in many ways. The woman's family is encouraged and facilitated to be an active participant during the childbirth process to enhance positive experience and parent-infant bonding.

Midwifery

Midwifery works within the paradigm of normal childbirth which is a characteristic life process for most women. It also plays a participatory role in the detection and management of abnormalities and complications.

Midwifery is holistic by nature addressing the physiological, psychosocial, cultural and spiritual needs of a woman and her family by promoting and protecting the safety and health of the mother and her infant.

Midwifery is a unique body of knowledge that encompasses elements of art and science; and advances through experience and research.

Midwifery care is provided in partnership with the woman and her family in a continuous, empowering and supportive manner.

A midwife also works in collaboration with other healthcare professionals, assuming, in particular, a role in the early detection of abnormal conditions and in collaboration with doctors in the management of complications during pregnancy.

The goal and core activity of midwifery care is to deliver high quality, competent and compassionate care regardless of the client's race, creed, and economic or social status.

SCOPE OF PRACTICE

A midwife must be able to give the necessary supervision, care and advice to women during pregnancy, labour and the postpartum period, to conduct deliveries on her own and to care for the newborn and the infant. This care includes the implementation of preventive measures, the detection of abnormal conditions in mother and children, the procurement of medical assistance and the execution of emergency measures in the absence of medical help. She also participates as a professional in the management of complicated and abnormal situations arising from pregnancy, childbirth and puerperium. She has an important task in health counselling and education, not only for women, but also within the family and community. The work should involve antenatal education and preparation for parenthood, and extends to certain areas of gynaecology, family planning and childcare. She may practise in hospitals, clinics, health units, and domiciliary conditions or in any other service.

Adapted from the International Confederation of Midwives, 1992

When engaged to attend a confinement, the midwife must realize that she is responsible for bringing the expectant mother safely through pregnancy, labour and puerperium and for securing the birth of a healthy infant. Where there is any doubt as to the fulfilment of these conditions the woman should be referred to a doctor or to a hospital.

Hong Kong Midwives Board, Handbook for Midwives, p.8
(January 1995)

CODE OF CONDUCT

The fundamental philosophy and expectations of the functioning of a midwife are reflected through the Code of Conduct. The Code offers guidance for the professional behaviour of a midwife.

To the Clients

1. A midwife respects the woman's individual needs, values and culture irrespective of her race, religion, life style, sexual orientation, socio-economic status or the nature of health condition.
2. A midwife preserves the dignity of the woman and her family.
3. A midwife respects the rights of the woman to make informed choices in relation to her care.
4. A midwife works in partnership with the woman and her family.
5. A midwife acts as an advocate to protect and promote the interests and welfare of the woman and her family.
6. A midwife should not conduct, participate or collaborate in any research involving human subjects without the prior approval of the relevant research ethics committee.

To the Profession

1. A midwife has a moral right to refuse to participate in procedures that would violate her reasoned moral conscience, but without depriving the woman of essential healthcare.
2. A midwife takes appropriate action if an act by colleague(s) infringes the standard of care.
3. A midwife upholds the good standing and reputation of the profession.
4. A midwife contributes to the advancement of the profession.
5. A midwife actively participates in the education of midwife learners.
6. A midwife should not allow her registration status to be used in advertisements of commercial products/services.

To the Community

1. A midwife acts as a role model in serving the community.
2. A midwife commits to the promulgation of quality midwifery care in Hong Kong.
3. A midwife values the promotion of an ecological, social and economic environment that supports and sustains the health and well-being of society.

With Other Healthcare Professionals

1. A midwife maintains professional independence.
2. A midwife has the responsibility to maintain cooperation and a good working relationship with other healthcare professionals in the best interests of the mother and baby.

To herself

1. A midwife has a duty to maintain and improve the standard of knowledge and competence which she has achieved at the point of registration in order to promote higher standards of practice.
2. A midwife should keep herself up to date through study activities which are relevant to her roles in order to be safe to practise in the contemporary world.

A midwife is required to comply with policies and procedures formulated by her hospital or institution insofar as they are consistent with her legal and professional obligations.

Autonomy

A midwife is an autonomous practitioner subject to regulation by the Midwives Council of Hong Kong.

Accountability

A midwife is accountable for her midwifery practice to the woman and her family. Each midwife is personally accountable for maintaining and improving her own professional knowledge and competence in order to ensure that the actions within her sphere of responsibility safeguard and protect the interests of clients.

A midwife may practise within the Scope of Practice stipulated in this booklet. Each midwife must ensure a safe practice in relation to childbearing and childbirth. She should make clinical decisions judiciously with reference to professional knowledge. A midwife must obtain valid consent before giving any treatment or care to the woman. She should consult and refer as necessary when the woman's needs for care exceed the professional scope of her expertise.

Documentation

A midwife should document clearly, concisely and systemically all observations, interventions given to the woman and the outcome of care. A midwife has a duty to maintain records of cases upon which she is in professional attendance.

Communication

A midwife should develop a trustful relationship with the woman and her family through effective communication. A midwife shares her professional opinion to enable the woman and her family to determine which plan(s) to use.

Confidentiality

Any personal data of the client should be dealt with having due regard to the client's right to confidentiality and the provisions of the Personal Data (Privacy) Ordinance, Cap. 486.

SOME IMPORTANT LEGAL OBLIGATIONS

1. A practising midwife must hold a valid practising certificate issued under section 22 of the Midwives Registration Ordinance (Cap.162).
2. In case any child is born in, or any new-born child is admitted to, any public institution, convent or other charitable or religious institution, it shall be the duty of the person having charge of such institution or convent to obtain and give the registration particulars to the Registrar of Births and Deaths.
3. A midwife should not administer any drug without a prescription given by a registered medical practitioner unless the drug is enlisted in the *Handbook for Midwives (Midwives Council of Hong Kong)*.
4. With respect to the acceptance of advantages, midwives are reminded of the criminal liabilities imposed by the Prevention of Bribery Ordinance (Cap. 201).

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Midwife	A midwife is a person who is registered under Section 8 of the Midwives Registration Ordinance (Cap.162). She may practise in hospitals, clinics, and health units or in any other services.
Client	The woman, her family members or community with whom midwifery care is planned and implemented.
Family	A small social system in the form of a household, made up of individuals of strong reciprocal affections and loyalties, and with a lasting relationship.
Code of Conduct	The values and beliefs that reflect the fundamental philosophy of the profession and stipulate the expectations of moral behaviour of its practitioners.
Code of Practice	General guidelines relating to the standard of practice of the profession. It is based upon the code on conduct within the scope of practice.
Scope of Practice	Parameters within which a midwife may practise midwifery under the Midwives Registration Ordinance (Cap.162).
Medical practitioner	A medical practitioner registered in accordance with the Medical Registration Ordinance Cap. 161

Extracts of the Midwives Registration Ordinance

Section

Provisions

- 8(1) A person who claims to be qualified for registration as a midwife may apply in the manner provided to the secretary for registration.
- 8(2) The name of a person qualified to be registered in accordance with section 7 who has complied with subsection (1) and with any regulations relating thereto shall, subject to payment of the prescribed fee and to subsection (3), be entered upon the register by the Council.
- 8(3) If, after an inquiry in accordance with regulations made under section 23 into any case referred to it by the Preliminary Investigation Committee, the Council is satisfied that a person applying under subsection (1) has in Hong Kong or elsewhere –
- (a) been convicted of an offence with imprisonment ; or
 - (b) been guilty of unprofessional conduct,
- the Council may, in its discretion, refuse to enter the name of that person upon the register.
- 10(3) For the purpose of section 8 and this section, “unprofessional conduct” means an act or omission of a registered midwife which could be reasonably regarded as disgraceful or dishonourable by registered midwives of good repute and competency.
- 22(1) A registered midwife shall not practise as such unless the midwife is the holder of a current practising certificate.

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