

Education and Training Workforce:
Early Childhood Development.
Submission.

I have been employed as a Maternal and Child Health Nurse in Victoria for 18 years. I qualified in 1992 from RMIT Bundoora Melbourne.

I feel that my previous midwifery qualification and experience has been an essential pre-requisite for my practice.

After a new birth notice and domiciliary report has been sent to our Maternal and Child Health Centre from the hospital we are able to read what birth experience the mother and baby have undergone. This document obtains various terminologies which are unique to midwifery practice. I would say that these terms and abbreviations would be extremely difficult for a non midwife to decipher. In fact I have often explained details to the parents from the birth history notes in their child's health record as the parents don't understand what is written about their labour and delivery.

Also if there are any unclear issues I am able to converse with the midwifery staff at the hospital.

This information gives me an insight as to how the mother may present to me such as if she has had a prolonged labour, emergency caesarian after a labour, retained placenta etc,etc. I will understand what has been written. This is important information I would not understand if I was only a Registered Nurse. Plus there may be issues for the baby such as low Apgar Scores, jaundice, slow weight gain, feeding problems etc, etc which I will also understand as a midwife. Plus if the baby is breast fed this is also an expertise I have gained from my midwifery experience.

Also if I were not a nurse, I can fail to see how my level of expertise would in anyway be comparable to a non nurse. I deal every day with mothers and children with the full range of possible normal and abnormal clinical conditions. It is my nursing experience and judgment which guides me every day. These skills I learnt as a junior nurse and they have been developed with my subsequent studies in nursing midwifery and Maternal and Child Health. Again, I use this knowledge of the medical terminology I have learnt which helps me to talk to medical practitioners and allied health personnel.

Victoria decided to have the old Triple Certificate Qualification many years ago for its Infant Welfare Nurses and to my mind it was with these above very good reasons; which still apply today.

Other states would be better to follow our example.