



15TH NATIONAL
RURAL HEALTH
CONFERENCE
Better together!

24-27 MARCH 2019
Hotel Grand Chancellor
Hobart, Tasmania



NATIONAL RURAL
HEALTH
ALLIANCE LTD

Where there is no midwife: the Imminent Birth Education Program

Jenny Kelly¹, Jane Connell²

¹Townsville Hospital and Health Service, ²Queensland Health

Introduction

Queensland Health is committed to providing high quality, safe and sustainable health services to meet the needs of communities. Integral to the provision of high quality care is the need for evidence-based education programs that provide clinical staff with opportunities to develop their knowledge and skills.

While the majority of births in Australia occur in hospitals with maternity services, it is inevitable that some women will present in established labour to health facilities without midwives or other appropriately qualified staff. These unexpected presentations pose challenges for the woman, her family and the health workforce. In 2016, 69 women gave birth in 32 Queensland Health facilities without maternity services; approximately 90% of these births occurred in rural and remote settings.

Methods

A participatory action approach was employed to develop, implement and evaluate the Imminent Birth Education Program for non-midwives practising in rural and remote non-birthing facilities in Queensland. A state-wide steering group was established and consulted on all stages of the project. The project consisted of three distinct phases:

- Development of an online, evidence based component of the education program
- Pilot testing the online component and implementing the Imminent Birth Education Program throughout Queensland
- Evaluation of the online modules and onsite workshop including a train the trainer guide for midwifery facilitators.

Results

By the end of the project an evidence-based Imminent Birth Education Program to be used by the non-midwifery workforce in rural and remote non-birthing sites was developed, evaluated and implemented throughout Queensland. The education package comprises an online component, 3.6-hour Imminent Birth workshop and a facilitator guide for a midwife to facilitate the course. By July 2018, 639 health professionals completed the online course, 114 non-midwives completed an onsite

workshop and 54 health professionals were trained to facilitate the face-to-face workshop. More than 90% of participants agreed that they would be able to implement some practice changes as a result of completing this course. Many mentioned they would be more prepared for an imminent birth including 'knowledge of the birthing box', 'ensuring that the birthing kit is up to date' and necessary medications. They also mentioned an increased awareness of appropriate guidelines and paperwork and knowing where to access them. The Imminent Birth Education Program was facilitated in all 16 Queensland Hospital and Health Services

Conclusion

The education program resulted in improved knowledge of the non-midwifery workforce to assist and support women who present when birth is imminent. It has decreased levels of anxiety about providing clinical care to women who present at non-birthing facilities when birth is imminent and improved ability to provide women who present when birth is imminent with safe, evidence-based clinical care. The Imminent Birth Education Program was facilitated in all 16 Queensland Hospital and Health Services.

Presenters

Dr Jenny Kelly is a registered nurse and midwife. In addition to her Bachelor of Nursing degree she has postgraduate qualifications and expertise in adult education (Graduate Diploma), women's studies (Master of Arts), public health (MPH) and a PhD from Deakin University. Jenny has spent most of her professional life in northern Australia where she has worked as a remote area nurse, midwife and educator. Jenny holds an adjunct Senior Research Fellow appointment with James Cook University in Townsville where she remains an active researcher. Jenny was the initial CNC Project Officer for the state-wide Imminent Birth Education Program who developed the Imminent Birth Education Program.

Jane Connell was employed as the Clinical Nurse Consultant–Project Officer for the state-wide Imminent Birth Education Program from August 2017 to September 2018. Her past experience includes teaching midwifery at the University of Goroka in the Highlands of Papua New Guinea, and public health and tropical medicine at James Cook University in Townsville. Jane has worked clinically in urban, and rural and remote settings in Australia, in primary health facilities to tertiary facilities. From 1999 to 2008, she undertook various overseas positions with the medical humanitarian aid organisation Medecins Sans Frontieres providing general and women's health care in Afghanistan, Sierra Leone, China, Ethiopia, Liberia and Somalia. Currently based in Townsville, Jane provides antenatal and postnatal care to women on Palm Island, an Aboriginal community approximately 70 kilometres from Townsville, North Queensland.