

Editorial

Normal birth in Hong Kong

In the past two decades, one of the most significant developments in the midwifery practice is to support normal birth in low-risk pregnant women. This is well supported by obstetricians and midwives. To facilitate normal birth, midwives are responsible for the care of women's psychological health by providing a home-like environment and allowing the husband to accompany the woman during labour, as well as the care of women's physical health by providing non-pharmacological pain relief methods, supporting ambulation during labour, facilitating delivery with different delivery positions, and restricting the use of episiotomy.

Since 2006, midwives from Hong Kong have visited birth centres in the United Kingdom to learn the midwifery practice of normal birth. They have attended conferences held by the International Confederation of Midwives every 3 years and by the Normal Labour and Birth Research Conference every year to obtain updated knowledge. In addition, some midwives were sent to attend the normal birth module at the University of Central Lancashire in United Kingdom to obtain in-depth knowledge of normal birth. All these enable midwives in Hong Kong to make changes towards normal birth step by step.

Midwives provide training to pregnant women on non-pharmacological pain relief methods such as LK massage, aromatherapy, and birth-ball, with the hope to reduce the use of pharmacological pain reliefs such as pethidine or Entonox, which have adverse effects on women and babies. Both education and training are important in the development of a profession. The visits to birth centres and conferences inspired midwives in Hong Kong to implement midwifery practice on normal birth. However, more has to be done to further propagate the practice of normal birth. The guidelines by the Royal College of Midwives can help us plan for future development. Midwives are encouraged to learn updated information from evidence-based research.

On 28 to 30 October 2024, the International Normal Labour and Birth Research Conference will be held in Hong Kong. We are eagerly looking forward to this valuable opportunity to exchange knowledge and skills with renowned international experts to promote normal birth.

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