

Spiritual Care in Secular Midwifery - The Danish Case

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DENMARK

- Northern Europe
- Protestants (77% members of church)
- Nearly 6 mio inhabitants
- Life expectancy (both sexes) 78,6 y
- Nearly 60.000 births in 2016
- 1,79 child/woman in 2016

SOME DANISH MIDWIFERY HISTORY

- Oldest regulations for midwives
 - Sweden 1711
 - Denmark and Norway 1714
- Midwives ought to be
 - Trained
 - Examined by 'medicii'
 - Authorized
 - ...could lose authorization if they left a poor woman in labour to earn more money by looking after a rich one instead...

From 1785, all midwives in Copenhagen had a sign on their house so that they could be found when needed...

TRUSTWORTHINESS OF PROFESSIONS

Faggruppernes troværdighed
 Nedenstående figur viser danskernes opfattelse af faggruppernes troværdighed.

RADIUS

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BEGINNING OF LIFE

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- Birth
 - potentially transforming life
 - impacting existential meaning
- In research found to be:
 - Intense
 - Unique
 - Mysterious
 - Powerful
 - Transforming
 - Unifying
 - Meaningful
 - Transcendent
- Rebirth of woman into a mother

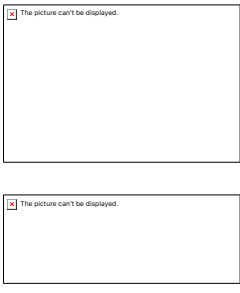
INTEREST IN SPIRITUAL CARE TRAINING? WHO

- Observation in 18 countries of how spirituality, religion and personal beliefs (SRPB) relate to quality of life: *"It is suggested that SRPB should be more routinely addressed in assessment of QoL, as it can make a substantial difference"*
 - WHOQOL SRPB Group 2006
- Spiritual Care → Palliative Care: *"Integrates the psychological and spiritual aspects of patient care,"*
 - WHO definition of palliative care 2011
- Feb 2018: New WHO guideline on intrapartum care
 - Growing medicalization of the process: *"... not only the clinical requirements for a safe labour and childbirth but also meet the psychological and emotional needs of women."*
 - WHO 2018

INTERNATIONAL CONFEDERATION OF MIDWIVES

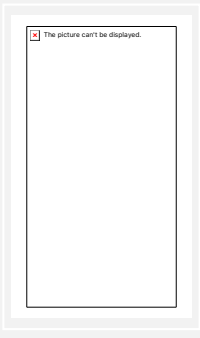
- *"...Midwifery care is holistic in nature, grounded in an understanding of the social, emotional, cultural, spiritual, psychological and physical experiences of women..."* (ICM 2007)

MIDWIFERY EDUCATION IN DENMARK – BA AND MA



MATERNITY CARE


- Existential and spiritual aspects of the childbirth period remain in the periphery of prevailing care
- Hospital is the most religious place in the city?
- New initiatives emerging from the Danish national church and private market related to motherhood and childbirth
- First professor in Spiritual Care in Denmark – although with a focus on cancer
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- Rise in literature on existential and spiritual aspects of childbirth and midwifery
- ... reflects the very essence of what it is to be human...



CHARACTERISTICS

- Beginning of life – expectations different from end of life
- Maternity Service – hospital
- Time constraints – contacts lasting on average 15-20 minutes in prenatal care
- No life-continuing contact (as GPs)
- 1/3 of midwives leaves maternity ward

**MOTHERHOOD TRANSITION
THROUGH AN EXISTENTIAL LENS**



NEW STUDIES

Soulful childbirth - upgrading communication on existential matters in Danish Maternity Care Services. An actionbased research project developing a blended-learning postgraduate course.

Resonance between beginning of life and end of life – an un-trodden path to health in Maternity Services? A comparative study of two PhD studies researching birth and death respectively

Pastoral care in maternity services – also if everything seem right. Introducing pastoral care sessions in maternity care.

The Buddy Study – a peer support programme after adverse events

Does fatherhood change the meaning in life for first-time fathers? A qualitative study using the "Sources of Meaning Card Method" focusing on existential perspectives in fatherhood

Being a newly qualified midwife... an interpretative phenomenological study focusing on transition from student to professional. Meaningfulness seem important.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION

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