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WHOSE JOB IS IT? PERCEIVED BY MIDWIFERY-TRAINED REGISTERED NURSES IN INTRANATAL UNITS AT TERTIARY CARE HOSPITALS IN THE WESTERN PROVINCE OF SRI LANKA

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ABSTRACT

Midwifery trained registered nurse's (MTRN) scope of practice is contentious and it has not been evaluated so far in the Sri Lankan context. This descriptive cross-sectional study aimed to address the existing knowledge gap describing findings of a survey among MTRNs in intra-natal units at tertiary care hospitals in the Western Province of Sri Lanka. Their opinion of labour room (LR) tasks, and responsibilities was obtained through a postal survey which was mailed to 227 MTRNs at five selected tertiary care hospitals. Response rate was 82% (186). Respondents rated the primary responsible person for each of 39 tasks in the LR. Data were analyzed using SPSS version 20; descriptive statistics were calculated.

Only 12/39 tasks were rated as primary responsibilities of MTRNs; all other tasks were identified as over-lapping with the roles of other professionals. Eight tasks were rated as primary responsibilities of both MTRNs and doctors; 4 as the primary responsibility of MTRNs and Midwives; 6 as primary responsibility of MTRNs, Doctors, and Midwives. The most contentious LR task was performing deliveries, which was rated as a primary responsibility of three professionals; 88% rates this as MTRNs' own tasks, 70% as midwives' tasks, and 40% as doctors' tasks.

MTRN's held different opinions about their primary responsibilities, a large number of the LR tasks seemed to overlap with other professionals' tasks; this can lead to role confusion and conflicts among interprofessional teams in maternity care settings. Well-defined professional boundaries are needed for MTRNs in order to improve interprofessional collaboration and ensure safe maternity care delivery.

Keywords: midwifery-trained registered nurse, Sri Lanka, maternity care team