

**Enabling new graduate midwives to work in  
midwifery continuity of care models  
in Australia**

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A thesis submitted in fulfillment of the requirements for  
the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Centre for Midwifery, Child and Family Health  
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August 2016

## **Certificate of Authorship/Originality**

I certify that the work in this thesis has not previously been submitted for a degree nor has it been submitted as part of requirements for a degree except as fully acknowledged within the text.

I also certify that the thesis has been written by me. Any help that I have received in my research work and the preparation of the thesis itself has been acknowledged. In addition, I certify that all information sources and literature used are indicated in the thesis.

Signature of Student

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Allison Cummins

Date: 14 December 2016

## Acknowledgements

I began this journey many years ago working in a hospital that introduced widespread midwifery continuity of care to women. At the time it seemed the best way for new graduates to transition from a student to a midwife was to be working in woman centred care models. I had the opportunity to work alongside some of these transitioning midwives. I want to thank those young midwives and the manager at the time, Jan White, as the experience of working with those midwives inspired me to undertake this research.

This research would not have been made possible without the enthusiasm of a new group of newly graduated midwives who participated in this research. I would like to thank those new graduate midwives. Their responsiveness included referring me onto other new graduate midwives working in midwifery continuity of care when the scarcity of these recruits became clear to me. I felt privileged to have the opportunity to hear your stories and share in your journey. I am also very grateful to the managers, educators, clinical support midwives and clinical midwifery specialists who took time out of their hectic schedules to discuss with me the facilitators and barriers to employing and supporting new graduate midwives in a system that remains medically dominated and risk averse.

I would like to thank the Australian College of Midwives who provided me with some funds that contributed towards data collection and expensive transcription costs. I would also like to thank the professional proof reader who did the last edits on this thesis. The funds also assisted me to travel to the Australian College of Midwives, South Australian Branch, 'Midwifery Models' conference which was extremely fruitful to my research as that is where I met many visionary leaders who are discussed in Chapter Seven!

The most visionary leader who I want to acknowledge and thank is my supervisor Caroline Homer. Caroline was one of the leaders in research in midwifery continuity of care in this country. Caroline supported me to continue the important work

in this area, as the benefits are so enormous for both women and midwives. Caroline has patiently taught me how to 'do' the research. She has speed-read endless drafts and always given amazing feedback. The learning on this journey with Caroline leading has been amazing. Thank you for sharing your wisdom, always being available, answering emails with lightning speed and carrying around my thesis in your handbag. Together, we share a vision for midwifery continuity of care to be available to women and new graduate midwives alike.

I also have to thank my co-supervisor, Elizabeth Denney-Wilson. Through this journey I have developed a relationship of trust and friendship with Elizabeth. She opened my eyes very early on in the journey, making me realise I didn't need to get it right the first time; I was learning and, once I realised this fact, it all became so much easier. Thank you for being there constantly with a lovely warm smile and friendship.

I have felt well supported as a student from the Centre for Midwifery, Child and Family Health under the Directorship of Caroline Homer. Again there has been visionary leadership with the student meetings and networking.

The journey takes time and space and I want to thank my partner, Sam, for playing soccer every Saturday and giving me time and space to write this thesis, including on planes and holidays with him. Time and space at home was also necessary to complete the thesis and I have to thank my daughter Gabrielle and my son Harrison.

Gabi and Harry have brought so much joy to my life and are what makes my house a home. They understood my need to sit on the lounge for endless hours on Saturdays writing. During this journey as a family we have achieved two Higher School Certificates and this final thesis. I hope to inspire you both to keep studying and learning throughout your lives and I thank you for being around me while I completed the doctorate

## **Publications and presentations from this research**

### **Conference presentations:**

Australian College of Midwives 18<sup>th</sup> Biennial conference, 2013, Hobart

- Poster presentation - Facilitating new graduate midwives in midwifery continuity of care Models

Australian Centre for Perinatal Science, 2014, University of New South Wales

- Poster presentation - What are the experiences of new graduate midwives working in midwifery continuity of care models?

International Confederation of Midwives, 2015, Asia Pacific region conference, Japan

- Oral presentation - What are the experiences of new graduate midwives working in midwifery continuity of care models?

Nurse Education today and Nurse Education in Practice (NETNEP), 2016, Brisbane

- The mentoring experiences of new graduate midwives working in midwifery continuity of care models in Australia.

### **Accepted for presentation:**

11<sup>th</sup> International Normal Labour and Birth conference, 2016, Western Sydney University

- Oral presentation – What are the experiences of new graduate midwives working in midwifery continuity of care models?
- Poster presentation – The challenges of employing new graduate midwives in midwifery group practice in hospitals.

31<sup>st</sup> ICM Triennial Congress, 2017, Toronto, Canada

- Oral presentation – What are the experiences of new graduate midwives working in midwifery continuity of care models?
- Poster presentation – The challenges of employing new graduate midwives in midwifery group practice in hospitals.

### **Publications**

**Cummins, A.M.**, Denney-Wilson, E. & Homer, C.S.E. 2016, 'The challenge of employing and managing new graduate midwives in midwifery group practices in hospitals', *Journal of Nursing Management*, 24, 614–623

**Cummins, A.M.**, Denney-Wilson, E. & Homer, C.S.E., 2015 'The mentoring experiences of new graduate midwives working in midwifery continuity of care models in Australia', *Nurse Education in Practice*.

<http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.nepr.2016.01.003>

**Cummins, A.M.**, Denney-Wilson, E. & Homer, C.S.E. 2015, 'The experiences of new graduate midwives working in midwifery continuity of care models in Australia', *Midwifery*, vol. 31, no. 4, pp. 438-44.

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## **Abstract**

### **Enabling New Graduate Midwives to work in Midwifery Continuity of Care Models in Australia**

#### **Background**

Midwifery continuity of care is care provided to a woman throughout pregnancy, birth and the early parenting period, from one midwife or a small group of midwives. Midwifery continuity of care is considered the gold standard of care for women - they will experience less obstetric intervention and higher levels of satisfaction with their birth experience. Newly graduated midwives are ideally placed to work in these models, especially as in Australia they have had continuity of care opportunities through their education. However, there are limited opportunities in Australia for new graduate midwives to work in midwifery continuity of care and the literature focuses on new graduate midwives working in standard hospital transition to professional practice programs without midwifery continuity of care. This study was interested in exploring where midwifery continuity of care was available for new graduates, their experiences and how this might be expanded across the country.

#### **Aims**

The aim of the research was to:

1. Explore the experiences of new graduate midwives who work in midwifery continuity of care models in Australia.
2. Explore the facilitators and barriers to employing and supporting new graduate midwives working in midwifery continuity of care models.

#### **Methods**

This research was conducted in two phases. Phase one explored the experiences of new graduate midwives working in midwifery continuity of care models. Phase two explored the facilitators and barriers to employing new graduate midwives in midwifery continuity of care models. A qualitative study was undertaken. Data were collected through face-to-face, phone and Skype interviews. A thematic analysis was undertaken and the theories of continuity of care and the diffusion of innovation were used to further analyse the data. The study was set in Australia.

## **Results**

The new graduate midwives built trusting relationships with the women, consolidating skills through knowing the women. They built trusting relationships with the small group of midwives they worked alongside and this provided the new graduates with a high level of support. The barriers to employing new graduate midwives in midwifery continuity of care models were overcome by visionary leaders.

## **Conclusions**

The findings provide unique insights into the experiences of new graduate midwives who work in midwifery continuity of care models and the challenges of employing them into the models. New graduate midwives are prepared and feel supported to work in midwifery continuity of care models. Managers and other key stakeholders provide high levels of support to new graduate midwives working in the models. This research provides a conceptual model that identifies the essential elements to enabling new graduate midwives to work in midwifery continuity of care models.