



New Zealand College of Midwives Journal

Te Hautaka o Te Kāreti o ngā Kaiwhakawhānau ki Aotearoa

<https://www.midwife.org.nz/journal>



EDITORIAL

Evolution of the Journal in the last decade

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In late 2014, I was invited to join the Editorial Board of the New Zealand College of Midwives Journal. I was honoured to accept this role, recognising the Journal as a cornerstone for advancing midwifery research and practice in Aotearoa New Zealand. During my tenure as sub-editor, the Journal has adapted to the evolving demands of academic, political and healthcare landscapes, while maintaining its commitment to being a high-quality publication. This editorial serves as an opportunity for me to reflect on the Journal's progress during the decade of my involvement, highlighting its successes, challenges and future directions.

Changes to the Editorial Board

As part of providing a platform for shared knowledge and meaningful representation, a diverse editorial board demonstrates a commitment to cultural safety, equity and inclusivity, which in turn fosters trust and engagement with indigenous and other communities. Significant changes to the Journal's Board have occurred in recent years to ensure that its membership reflects this commitment. In 2018, the decision was made to include a consumer voice, resulting in the appointment of Dr Eva Neely. Te Tiriti o Waitangi responsibilities were recognised and expressions of interest for editorial board members who could bring te ao Māori perspectives were sought this year, as well as a need for researchers with Pacific and/or quantitative research experience. Dr Jacqueline Martin and Talei Jackson were appointed in 2024, bringing Māori and Pacific perspectives respectively.

A platform for te ao Māori

In recent years, there has been a growing emphasis on integrating concepts from te ao Māori into the Journal. Māori researchers have been lead authors and co-authors of several of the Journal's recently published papers and, this year, the Journal formalised its full te reo title, Te Hautaka o Te Kāreti o ngā Kaiwhakawhānau ki Aotearoa. The Journal supports the normalisation of te reo Māori by promoting its use in academic articles, with definitions and glossaries as needed. This approach has enriched the Journal's content, ensures that the Journal resonates with its local audience, grows understanding of kupu Māori (Māori words and terms) for those to whom they are unfamiliar (including international readers), while contributing to the global discourse on midwifery care.

A commitment to international editorial standards

The Board has updated several policies in 2024 to align more explicitly with the Recommendations of the International Committee of Medical Journal Editors (ICMJE). In line with ICMJE and the World Health Organization, the Journal has adopted the Sex and Gender Equity in Research (SAGER) guidelines. These outline the importance of including both sex and gender in health research, and provide internationally standardised research definitions for these terms. As well as providing clarity for authors and readers, this ensures that all individuals of all genders are respected and represented in midwifery research.

Global recognition

During my time on the Board, the Journal has made significant strides in its academic standing, including improvements in citation metrics and global recognition. We have already achieved indexing success with Cinahl, Scopus and ProQuest, reflecting the growing acknowledgment of our contributions to global midwifery scholarship.

We are also exploring additional indexing options, aiming to resubmit an application to Medline in 2025. A key challenge we have encountered with indexing in recent years is the inconsistent frequency of article publication. This likely reflects broader struggles within academic publishing, particularly during the pandemic years.

From paper print to digital print

The Journal's format has undergone a significant transformation. In 2013, it transitioned from being a paper-based publication only, to include electronic open-access, article-based publishing. This shift streamlined publication processes and enabled articles to be accessed sooner and by a wider audience. Electronic articles are released progressively throughout the year, with reader feedback indicating strong support for this approach. An annual print edition was retained until 2023, with the shift this year to being an electronic-only publication, enhancing accessibility and sustainability through a fully digital format.

This year's issue covers a diverse range of topics, beginning with two papers exploring partnership, both led by Shanti Daellenbach.

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The first reports on consumers' perspectives of midwifery care relationships in a hospital setting. The second identifies the key attributes of the mentoring relationship from the mentors' perspective and what impact this has on them professionally.

As part of the Te Kūkūnetanga research programme into improving pregnancy outcomes, the paper by Hannah Wyatt and colleagues investigates fruit and vegetable intake among a cohort of pregnant women, finding that a device to measure plasma carotenoid concentration could be used during pregnancy.

Two literature reviews explore important issues for midwives and identify areas for further midwifery research. Amy Taylor considers the workplace experiences of neurodiverse healthcare professionals and how this could reflect the experiences of Aotearoa midwives. Stephanie Taynton explores the barriers and facilitators to women accessing maternal mental health support services globally, to provide insights for maternity services in Aotearoa.

De Cleaver brings the art, heart and science of midwifery together in her case study about her midwifery relationship with a whānau during the adoptive mother's induced lactation journey, and relates this to the possibilities for rainbow people growing their families.

Suzanne Miller and colleagues conclude in their paper that, despite the challenges of the Covid-19 pandemic, midwives demonstrated resilience and resourcefulness in continuing to meet the needs of whānau in their care.

In addition to research papers, this year the Journal published two letters to the editor about a published article alongside the authors' responses, in line with the policy of supporting responsible academic debate.

Looking ahead: Opportunities for growth

As the Journal progresses, short-term and longer-term plans have been made to expand its influence and address existing challenges. Findings from an author survey are being utilised to develop more

streamlined submission and review processes. The reviewer pool is being expanded and plans are in place to offer development opportunities for reviewers.

The Journal is fully funded by the College, so IT developments will be managed as internal capacity and capability allow. In future, we will add web-based publishing to broaden access to non-English speakers via Google Translate. Enhanced cookies and analytics will provide greater insight into our audience's demographics and download patterns. Longer term, we would like to be able to develop an online submission portal for authors, outlining their manuscript's journey from submission to publication.

The intention to promote the Journal as a platform for indigenous research is also on the horizon. By doing so, the Journal would not only honour its Aotearoa roots but also contribute to the global understanding of indigenous healthcare practices.

Conclusion

The Journal continues to carve out a unique and vital role in both national and international midwifery research. It is more than just an academic publication – it serves as a beacon for midwifery excellence in Aotearoa. As it moves forward, the Journal is well-positioned to continue to describe our midwifery model of care, influence midwifery practices and policies, and champion midwifery scholarship, equity and inclusion in healthcare. This will ensure it remains a trusted and innovative platform for years to come.

Ngā mihi


