

Abstract

Background:

Efforts to improve morbidity and mortality for both women and babies is contributing to the development of medical technology in maternity care. As midwives comprise the majority of the maternity care workforce, caring for women through pregnancy, intrapartum and into the postnatal period, the acceptance of any technological advances by midwives is important to ensure it is satisfactorily implemented. The research question for this study is: what are the enablers and barriers to midwives' acceptance of technology in maternity care?

Method:

The method for this study was Interpretive Phenomenology. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 11 midwives. Themes were identified using thematic analysis.

Results:

Themes for both enablers and barriers to the acceptance of technology were identified.

Barriers were:

- a fear of loss of clinical skills,
- poor specificity and overuse of current technology available and
- reduced time spent with women while attending to technology.

Enablers were:

- a risk adverse culture
- women's expectations
- a desire for medico-legal protection and

- a desire for accurate prediction of fetal wellbeing.

Conclusion:

Overall midwives accepted that the development of technology was inevitable and that it had the potential to improve maternal and fetal outcomes while providing medico-legal protection for clinicians. There were, however, concerns that technology would be adopted without proven benefit, and that midwifery skills would be lost as dependence on technology increased. Technology use was seen as reducing time spent with women as it was often cumbersome for women and midwives.