



International Confederation of Midwives

PRESS RELEASE

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‘The teaching of midwifery skills must respond to reality’

Over 2,000 midwives from 79 countries attending the 26th Triennial Congress of the International Confederation of Midwives heard Hilda Baca Neglia from the University of San Martin de Porres in Lima, Peru, speak on the ‘future of midwifery education’.

Hilda described the long history of midwifery education in Peru, where the first midwifery school was established in 1826 by a midwife named Benita Paulina Caddeau de Fessell. Today there are 26,000 licensed midwives in Peru; and 500 new midwives qualify every year.

The unique feature of the midwifery approach, according to Hilda, is ‘interpersonal care centred on women’. Midwives need to retain this focus while also broadening their horizons to ‘act locally, think globally’.

A three-fold challenge was presented to midwives:

- Maintain and reinforce interpersonal care centred on women’s needs
- Update your skills in specialised clinical care
- Expand your responsibilities beyond childbirth – become experts in public health

Midwives only provide clinical care for women during a short period of their lives; however, they can remain involved in women’s care through working in policy advocacy, and taking on monitoring and accountability of women’s sexual and reproductive rights.

Hilda Baca stressed that midwifery skills must ‘respond to reality’ - and therefore the teaching of midwives must do the same. Economic issues cannot be ignored; and to respond to economic arguments, it is necessary to evaluate educational programmes for their effectiveness.

The ICM is a Confederation of 83 national midwifery associations from 70 countries, founded in 1919. It aims to ‘advance world-wide the aims and aspirations of midwives in the attainment of improved outcomes for women in their childbearing years, their newborn and their families wherever they reside’.

Major international congresses are held every three years. The 26th Congress currently taking place in Vienna, Austria, includes over 750 presentations. Keynote speeches are given by leading midwives from every region of the world.

For further information contact ICM headquarters or visit the website www.internationalmidwives.org