

# Quality of midwifery care in the Netherlands

## Evaluation of primary midwifery care in the Netherlands: design and rationale of the Deliver study

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### Introduction

The core elements of the Dutch Maternity System are:

- Midwives are independent medical practitioners;
- 77% of midwives work in a primary care setting;
- Most pregnant women (78%) start their maternity care in a primary care setting;
- 44% start labour in primary care;
- 33% of women give birth under supervision of a primary care professional.

### Objective

The multicenter Deliver study is the first large-scale study evaluating the quality, organisation and accessibility of primary midwifery care, including many related research questions.

### Methods

#### Perspectives

- Clients & partners
- Midwives
- Other care providers

#### Practices

Purposive sampling to select 20 practices. Three stratification criteria: region, level of urbanisation, and practice type (dual or group practice).

#### Clients

All clients under care in the participating practices in a period of 12 months, speaking Dutch, English, Turkish or Arabic.

### Results

Data were collected between September 2009 and April 2011. The response rates were high (Table 1). Of all participating clients, 1764 clients were followed from the beginning of pregnancy until 6 weeks postpartum, giving a complete overview of the care they received. All data can be linked by unique anonymous identifiers.

### Discussion

The Deliver study will provide strong evidence about the strengths and weaknesses of the current primary maternity care system and gives insight into opportunities to improve safety and satisfaction in childbirth. Results of the Deliver study should further improve midwifery care in the Netherlands and contribute to evidence-based practice.

**Table 1** Measurement tools and amount of data

Level	Measure	Subjects	N (response)
Client	Questionnaires (max 3*)	Clients in 20 participating practices	7,894 (54%)
	Netherlands Perinatal Registry Electronic client records		
Midwife	Questionnaire	Midwives in 20 participating practices	99 (92%)
	Diary of work-related activities (one week)	Midwives + practice assistants in 20 participating practices	136 (100%)
	Video recordings of intake consults	Midwives in 6 participating practices	~300
Practice	Questionnaire	Midwifery practices in the Netherlands	319 (61%)
Other	Interviews	Clinical midwives, gynaecologists, general practitioners, maternity care assistants, paediatricians, ambulance personnel, O&G nurse	21
		Focus groups	Partners of pregnant women

\* 1st <35 weeks gestation, 2nd ≥35 weeks gestation, 3rd 6 weeks postpartum

**Table 2** Validated measurements used in client questionnaires

Measurement	Goal
Bologna score	Intrapartum care according to the best evidence
Dutch consumer quality index (CQI) treatment score	Experience of clients with structure and process aspects of health care
Labour Agency Scale	Personal control during childbirth
EuroQol questionnaire	Health-related quality of life

**Table 3** Content of measurements

Measurement	Issues
Questionnaire clients	- quality of midwifery care - ultrasound scans and prenatal screening - (preparation for) childbirth - emotions and feelings - health & lifestyle
Questionnaire midwives	- collaboration with other health care providers - tasks - attitudes towards job - quality of care - general information
Questionnaire midwifery practices	- organisation & size of the practice - provision of preconception information - collaboration and meetings with health care providers within and outside the practice - placements and education of midwifery students - care provided to ethnic minority women and undocumented women
Video of intake	- counselling on prenatal screening - counselling on 'healthy behaviour' - affect measures
Interview other care providers	- frequency and reasons for contact with midwives - structural meetings - satisfaction with collaboration
Focus group partners	- preferences, expectations and experiences regarding midwifery care

