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**MIDWIFERY OBSTETRIC HIGH DEPENDENCY CARE TRAINING – A DISASTER WAITING TO HAPPEN?**

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**Background** The critically ill obstetric patient poses unique challenges to the healthcare profession. The last confidential enquiry recommended that there should be a properly equipped, staffed and supervised high dependency (HD) area in every consultant-led obstetric unit. However, the DoH does not record obstetric HD beds in the 6 monthly census of UK critical care bed provision and very little is known about the skill set of midwifery staff caring for obstetric HD patients.

**Methods** Midwives working on the delivery unit of a busy tertiary centre were asked to complete an anonymised questionnaire about their experience and training in obstetric HD care.

**Results** We had 60 responses (86%). 72% of responders were direct entry midwives. 54% had received in-house training in advanced life support and 8% had attended an acute illness management course. Only 8% had received formal HD care training. 64% agreed or strongly agreed with the statement ‘I have felt out my depth looking after HD patients because of lack of knowledge’. 17% agreed or strongly agreed with the statement ‘I have received adequate training in HDU care’. Areas in which more training was felt to be required included arterial line monitoring (81%), blood gas analysis (50%) and assessing renal function (60%).

**Conclusions** Midwifery training programmes do not provide adequate HD care training. In house training sessions in the practical aspects of providing HD care have been arranged and a formal programme of study is being developed. We are looking to engage with the local undergraduate programme directors.