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Assessing the midwifery workforce demand: Utilizing Birthrate Plus in China

Hong Lu[1], Xiu Zhu[1] and Jiasi Yao[2]
[1]Peking University, China
[2]Hebei Medical University, China

Statement of the Problem: Globally, the shortage of midwifery workforce is widely noticed and decision-makers are putting increasing focus on the development of midwifery workforce. In case of shortage or surplus of workforce, it is essential to make exact demand prediction of staffing numbers before action. However, there is no existing workforce planning methodology for midwifery in China. Globally, Birthrate Plus Workforce Planning Methodology (BR+) is widely used and regarded as the Gold Standard in demand prediction of midwifery workforce. The purpose of this study is to assess the ability of the BR+ in forecasting the midwifery workforce demand in Chinese settings.

Methodology: A retrospective analysis of medical records was used to investigate client category and midwife hours. Hospitals were selected using stratified sampling methods. The client category and midwife hours in each hospital were analyzed over 1 month in consecutive three years (2013, 2014 and 2015).

Findings: Client category allocation varied between different hospital levels. Clients in higher category tended to need longer midwife hours. Mean birthrate of the ten hospitals was 154.30 (SD=40.700). The demand of midwifery staffing numbers was predicted and seven out of the ten hospitals were in need of more midwives.

Conclusion & Significance: Birthrate Plus Workforce Planning Methodology was proved to be effective and efficient in Chinese settings. Gaps between available and needed midwives were large and prevalent in Chinese hospitals. In light of the philosophy of continuous care in labor and broader area of midwifery service, the utilization of Birthrate Plus Workforce Planning Methodology would give scientific and valid suggestions in the development of midwifery workforce.

luhong@bjmu.edu.cn