

ABSTRACT

This work deals with the process of mapping the history of the profession and education of midwives, focusing on the Czech lands. The first mention of the existence of midwives dates back to the 2nd millennium BC (ancient Egypt, ancient Greece). Already at this time there was a detailed knowledge about pregnancy, childbirth and the complications that could occur.

The aim of this work is to find out as much information and knowledge as possible about the way and system of education of midwives from the beginnings (given the available sources this is the period from the Late Middle Ages to the Early Modern times) to the present.

The introductory chapters first describe the times where there was no comprehensive education system for midwives, so the teaching took place in such a way that a young girl served an apprenticeship with an experienced midwife, who passed all her knowledge and experiences on to her. Only since the end of the 18th century a compulsory training and qualification testing for midwives were introduced. In these days, future midwives prepare for the profession at universities by studying the bachelor's program in Midwifery, that lasts 3 years. The next chapters of the thesis discuss the general conditions that any midwife had to meet in order to do this profession (including the documents that entitled her to carry out the job), and what obligations she had to comply with when working. The day-to-day life of a midwife is also described: what her duties were, what she had to bring with her to deliver the neonate. A motivation for becoming a midwife or what punishments threatened her when she committed a crime are also discussed. At the end, there is an interesting information presented from the life of midwives Ludmila Kapalínová and Julie Vašínová, whose activities cover the 19th and most of the 20th century.

It is clear from the presented historical overview that the education of midwives/birth assistants has undergone a significant and fundamental process of changes over the centuries. From the transfer of knowledge from an experienced midwife to a young apprentice, to the current university studies.

keywords: history, education, profession, midwifery, midwives