

# Transforming lives: student midwives selecting the next generation.

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## Introduction:

The Nursing & Midwifery Council (NMC) <sup>1</sup> <sup>2</sup> actively encourage the involvement of students in the selection of future student midwives and nurses. There is evidence to suggest that employing the multiple mini interview (MMI) model rather than a single interview format may be

a more reliable method of assessment<sup>3</sup> <sup>4</sup> <sup>5</sup> <sup>6</sup>.

The aim of the research study was to explore the experiences of student midwives who participate in the MMI process at the University of Northampton due to the absence of evidence in this area.

## Methods:

This qualitative study collected data across two focus groups from a convenience sample of ten student midwives. Orthographic transcriptions were made and thematic analysis identified seven themes which included:

1. "A friendly face"
2. The tour
3. "How far we've come"
4. "A big responsibility"
5. Preparation for taking part,
6. Benefits of taking part
7. Relationships with others.



### Theme Four – "How far we've come"

SM4: "It's quite empowering to do them... because it makes you see how far you've come."

SM5: "They watch 'Call the midwife' .. And they think that's what it's like and it's nothing like that."

### Theme Five – "A big responsibility"

SM2: "I didn't think I would be part of the decision making... I didn't think they would ask me about the communication when they did and I thought that was really good."

SM10: "There was a realisation moment for me that, as much as you can wish for everybody to get through, sometimes in life you just have to realise that they have to ear that... Because we can't forget that it has to do with safety."

### Theme Seven – Benefits of taking part

SM10: "We have learnt skills that can help us in the future.. What grading and meeting criteria is."

SM2: "So when you go to interviews and things you can say 'I've done this extra..' You've got that thing you can say that can set you apart at interviews... You can say 'I showed commitment.'"

## Professional Identity

### Implications for Educators:

1) MMI is an effective way of integrating students into the interview and decision making process for future cohorts.

2) Participation in the interview process allow students to develop an awareness of the challenges that come with increasing professional accountability.

3) Students are likely to accrue additional skills which will help them when applying for jobs.

4) Students will need training in Equality & Diversity as well as rehearsing their work station and marking grid prior to interviewing applicants.

## Summary of findings.

**Transformation:** This emerging professional identity may pass unacknowledged until an intervention such as participation in student interviews has given students a neutral space outside of the classroom or clinical areas to reflect and evaluate their journey, so that the 'familiar or everyday appears in a new light'.<sup>7</sup>

**The next generation:** Assessing the suitability of applicants to a professional programme encourages students to align themselves with the professional rather than the student role and identify where they are on that continuum.

**Resilience:** Aligning themselves with qualified midwives marks the beginning of 'socialization' <sup>8</sup>. Adopting the beliefs and behaviours of the majority allows them to function as a professional within the NHS<sup>10</sup>. Although registrants may go on to reject these relationships and form new alliances at a later date, it is an important factor in minimising the risk of attrition during the early part of a nurse or midwife's career<sup>11</sup>.

**Increasing employability:** Participation in the interview process allows students to experience a leadership role, develop confidence in communicating with senior clinicians, accumulate extra-curricular activities to include on job applications and pick up 'hints' for future job interviews. Evidence suggests that fee-paying students favour courses that offer 'value for money'<sup>12</sup>.