A Joint Quality Initiative to Audit Baby Friendly Best Practice Standards on the Pre-Registration Midwifery Programme

INTRODUCTION

A joint quality improvement initiative was undertaken by lecturers and the breastfeeding support team of the Regional Maternity hospital to support Baby Friendly best practices on the 18 month Higher Diploma in Midwifery programme in the University of Limerick.

METHODOLOGY

The Deming Cycle was used as the framework to ensure that best evidence-based breastfeeding practice was incorporated into the 18 month Higher Diploma in Midwifery programme. A version of the UK Baby Friendly audit tool was used to assess the breastfeeding knowledge and skills acquisition of 15 student midwives.

RESULTS

The key findings of the audit were that students did have knowledge to support mothers to breastfeed but did not feel confident in providing basic breastfeeding support with positioning and attachment, and further skills acquisition was needed on hand expression and the use of breast pumps.

CONCLUSIONS

Changes have been made to the programme to ensure that student midwives develop the skills necessary to support mothers to breastfeed. Using a quality improvement initiative that is jointly developed in relation to baby friendly best practices is an effective means of evaluating learning outcomes in relation to the knowledge and skills acquisition of student midwives.