

and Clinical Coach were shown to support midwives in caring for women with various risks and complexities in the birth suite.

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### Dual degree destinations: Nursing or midwifery?



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Midwifery bodies have expressed concern that the competing ideologies of nursing science, which is closer to a medical model of care, and of midwifery can be confusing for students and counter-productive to their education as effective midwives. Proponents of dual nursing and midwifery degrees, however, argue that there is a need in rural and regional areas of Australia for graduate nurses and midwives who understand both of these ideologies and ways of working and are able to apply them both, in context, to practice in rural and regional areas. Until midwifery led model of care options become more readily accessible in rural areas, this dual nursing/midwifery qualification serves these areas well. Anecdotally, students enrolled in this dual degree appear to be focussed on careers as midwives.

This study uses a cross-sectional survey design to survey students enrolled in years one and four of two different four year dual nursing and midwifery degrees to ascertain preferences for practice area at these two stages of the course and graduates of the program at 12–36 months post-graduation to ascertain place/field of employment at this time frame. Cross sectional survey design allows data to be collected from different cohorts at varying times on the student and graduate trajectory at the same time. HREC approval is in place.

Data will be downloaded and subjected to simple descriptive analyses using SPSS. Responses from each cohort will be compared to ascertain differences between proposed career trajectories of each of the student cohorts against actual positions of the graduate cohort.

This study aims to provide a better understanding of students' motivations and intentions in studying a Bachelor of Nursing Science/Bachelor of Midwifery dual degree. This information is useful when considering implications for the nursing and midwifery workforces, particularly in relation to the issue of maldistribution.

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### Meditation from Tais



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**Introduction:** Meditation from Tais may be a phrase synonymous to many as the title of a renowned classical music composition. However, with just a small play on words, this phrase encapsulates the rich, diverse, confronting and heartwarming experience I had visiting Dili, Timor-Leste as a student midwife. Tais is the beautiful and unique cloth weaving performed only by the women of Timor-Leste, with every thread, colour and pattern of the weaving, imbued with meaning and purpose. With strong cultural heritage significance, the Tais represents not only the Timorese culture as a

whole, but the crucial space held by Timorese women, within that culture.

So often we think of the developing countries of the world as being far away places, however Timor-Leste is a mere one-hour flight from Darwin, across the Timor Sea – but a greater dichotomy of life, it seems hardly possible to fathom. As essentially a 15-year-old country, Timor-Leste has a litany of priority areas – all as genuinely urgent as the next and all inextricably interconnected. However from my student midwife perspective, *Meditation from Tais* equates to my reflection on the untenable maternal mortality rates of this developing country and the work that I have learned is being done to affect change in the maternity space, ensuring there are future generations of Timorese women who will continue to hand down the beautiful tradition of the Timor-Leste Tais.

**Aim or rationale:** To reflect on my experience of traveling to Dili, Timor-Leste – a developing country – for a 14-day short term international student exchange (STISE) experience in June/July 2017.

**Original perspective:** From a student midwife's perspective – how visiting a developing country for the first time to have an immersive midwifery experience has impacted me as a student midwife and how it will positively influence my future midwifery practice.

**Implications:** Implications for students going into practice, for registered midwives in practice and any other parties interested.

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### Midwifery students' understanding of normal birth, the role of the midwife, and breastfeeding



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**Introduction:** Entry to practice into the midwifery profession has changed in Australia in the last fifteen years; Bachelor of Midwifery, Dual Degree, Masters and Postgraduate Midwifery courses are all accredited courses leading to registration as a midwife. This has encouraged a variety of students with diverse cultural and societal backgrounds to enter into midwifery programs. These new students bring with them different experiences and perceptions regarding normal birth, the role of the midwife and breastfeeding.

**Aim:** The overall aim of this qualitative study was to generate new understanding to describe and explain the views and knowledge regarding the midwifery role, normal birth and breastfeeding, that students enrolled in a University in Western Australia, hold at the commencement of their midwifery education. The study also aimed to assess whether views, perceptions and knowledge had changed after nine weeks of University education within the midwifery courses commencement.

**Methods:** This study used a qualitative descriptive approach, where first year undergraduate and postgraduate midwifery students were invited to complete a questionnaire during orientation week. The questionnaire contained open-ended questions in order to explore student's beliefs and perceptions. These views were collected before any teaching and learning commenced. The researchers used latent content analysis to analyse the collected data. Ethical approval for this study was granted by the ethics committee at the University where the students were enrolled.

**Results:** The results revealed that the new students' perceptions of the role of the midwife, and highlighted the attitudes of this group of students regarding normal birth and breastfeeding, before midwifery education commenced.