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Midwives in German-speaking Switzerland: Part-time employment decreases feelings of stress in the context of work and increases job-satisfaction

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Statement of the Problem: The incorporation into the services sector with continuation of shiftwork harbors a risk of increased psycho-social workload for those in the midwifery profession.

Aim: Purpose of this study is to survey, for the first time, qualified members of the Swiss Federation of Midwives (n=268) with regard to their perception of pressure in the workplace.

Methodology & Theoretical Orientation: Data on quantitatively validated areas of workplace stress, as well as their influencing factors (including coping strategies, personality and working hours) was gathered using validated instruments. In addition, the participants formulated in their own words as to what they felt was burdensome in their work. This was then coded and quantitatively assessed by two independent monitors. The results were then correlated to the degree of employment of the respective midwife.

Results: There was significantly less incidence of pressure in the workplace ($r = -0.166/p < .05, d = .24, p < .05$) and on both conscientiousness, a personality trait with an evident relationship to burnout ($d = .20, p < .05$), with part-time (n=193) employment. Furthermore, part-time midwives reported more job satisfaction ($d = .18, p < .005$) and less risk of overexertion and exhaustion ($r = -0.179/ -0.155, p < .05$).

Conclusion & Significance: It is clear from the results that part-time employment has a pronounced influence on reducing the perception of pressure in the workplace as well as increasing job satisfaction. Employers are therefore advised to take the respective wishes of their employees concerning workload into consideration. This is of significant importance in the profession of midwifery, a predominantly female profession that is particularly challenged with reconciling work and family life.

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