‘Midwives values reflected in responses to personal memorabilia’
Initial findings from a larger research study into ‘Midwives responses to the changes in re—registration requirements in Australia’

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Overview of the presentation

• One element of data collection as part of a larger study, an investigation of midwives responses to the changed conditions for re-registration since 2010
• Objects were used to generate discussion during interviews with midwives across Australia, in all practice contexts
• Objects facilitated discussion to some depth about an experience which possessed meaning and value to the participants
Previously used by

• Social researchers
  – Visual images are integral to our lives, Becker believe that to ignore their significance would reduce our understanding of the objects under study (Becker 2000).
  – Bell suggest that without objects people would find it impossible to make statements using words alone and so to understand what our subjects/participants are saying it is important to take their visual aids objects seriously (Bell 2010)

• Architecture
  – “As the projections or embodiments of meaning, artefacts are not completely external to the world of their creators or of others engaging them, and so their meanings must be interpreted” (Yanow 2003 p.8).

• Health Care
  – Martha Hall (2003) made artists books as a healing strategy after she was challenged with breast cancer.
Method: Sample

• 20 participants with midwifery registration
• Across Australia
  – Victoria, New South Wales, Western Australia, Queensland
  – Rural, Remote, Cities, Suburban
• Variety of roles
  – Private, Public
  – Midwives, Nurses
  – Clinical, Management, Education
Method: Interviews using objects as a focus of conversation

- Objects as a data elicitation tool helped;
  - give depth to narratives
  - identify subconscious thoughts, meanings and values
  - midwives reflect on these values and identify what they are thinking about in the context of CPD and re-registration
Summary of Objects
Participant works as a Midwife working rural/remote providing antenatal and postnatal care to women.

‘It’s an oval shape, flat piece, on the topside of it, is a sculpture shape of a naked pregnant women. On the back is engraved the word Abundance. I think abundance to me is everything a woman is;... every women has an abundance of love, she has an abundance of belly to carry that baby. An ability to make an abundance of milk to feed that baby, and that’s I guess something I quite admire’....

‘I take it with me, whenever I travel...Its significance is its woman, so in a sense I guess if I have that with me..... I am always with woman’
Participant works as a Nurse with dual registration.

- ‘I am the only person from my family who went to university’
- ‘….when I finished my nursing I knew I wanted to go further, and I did a degree...that took seven years part time but I kept slogging away....then I did my midwifery as well’
- ‘...we graduated together...having that support person there is always great when you are studying’
- ‘I like to offer other people in the workplace lots of support in terms of their own study’
- ‘... if I didn’t have those academic qualifications I wouldn’t have been able to get this job..’
- ‘I guess you have to say you feel proud’
Summary

• Objects (artefacts) have previously been used by others to record subconscious meanings
• The objects presented here are physical but objects can also be non-physical
• Objects facilitated participants to express their values of what they see as important
• Motivation for CPD choices were identified
• Objects as a form of data collection needs further consideration
References

• Hall, M.A., 2003, Holding In, Holding On: Artist’s Books by Martha A Hall. Northampton, MA; Smith college, Mortimer Rare Book Room.