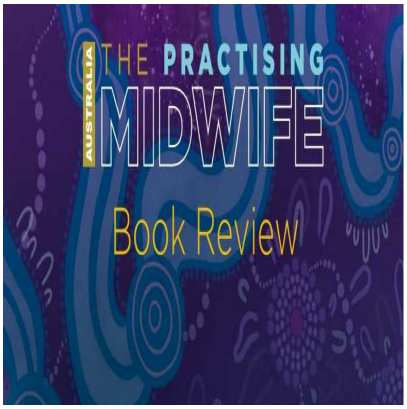


Description

Book Review: Sustainability, Midwifery and Birth Edited by Lorna Davies, Rea Daellenbach and Mary Kensington

Review by: Dr Ella Caine – Midwife, Norfolk

Published by Routledge

Publication date: 2021

Format: Paperback 296pp

RRP: £34.99

ISBN: 978-0367259259





The importance this book has for illuminating the broad context of midwifery care is clear. The authors are based in the UK, Ireland, New Zealand, Canada and Australia. The discussions of reproductive rights, justice, safe motherhood and the problematising of international economic development show how multifaceted childbirth is.

At the outset, sustainability is introduced as being more than an environmental concern. Instead, sustainability is conceptualised as a product of and contributory factor in wide-scale socio-economic systems. This sets the scene for

comprehensive discussions in the three subsequent sections. The first of these sections analyses capitalism, neoliberalism and privatisation of services, taking the reader through changes in the delivery of healthcare brought about by free market economics and the emerging treatment of healthcare as a commodity. Lest these ideas seem progressive, the authors provide accounts of unequal distribution of healthcare resources stemming from neoliberal designs of maternity services.

The second section proposes midwives as enhancers of sustainability. Midwives are seen as ‘social connectors’, ‘flow’ agents or ‘compassionate’ leaders. Threats to midwifery as a sustainable model of care are used as evidence of how relevant the concept (sustainability) is. These are lofty assertions of the reach of midwifery practice. They do assume, however, that midwives recognise such qualities, and have the education or employment conditions to practise sustainably. The last section focuses on sustainability of environments e.g. the pregnant environment, including the impacts of teratogens, birthing environment, and the sustaining effect of (positive) relationships. It includes the politics of infant feeding and food security implications where market forces dominate the production and supply of formula/artificial milk. This is a creatively conceived book, somewhat limited, however, by the lack of voices from Africa/the Caribbean/Asia or lack of diversity of voices within the chosen countries. Greater efforts are needed to enrich literature and debate in this area. We need a fuller picture of global activism[1] to inspire and encourage wider perspectives of sustainability. **TPM**

Reference

1. Kenya Evelyn. ‘Like I wasn’t there’: climate activist Vanessa Nakate on being erased from a movement. The Guardian. https://www. theguardian.com/world/2020/jan/29/vanessanakate-interviewclimate-activism-cropped-photo-davos. Published January 29, 2020. Accessed January 9, 2022

Category

1. Australia - TPMA
2. Book reviews

Tags

1. 2024
2. book review
3. midwifery

Date Created
15th February 2024