



**Developing a Research Agenda
for the American College of Nurse-Midwives
Executive Summary
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Background:

The ACNM DOR, at the direction of the Board of Directors, developed a draft research agenda based on the ACNM Strategic Priorities to guide the organization's research direction over the next 5 years. The purpose of the study was to gain perspectives from selected members of ACNM about the importance and ranking of specific items in a draft ACNM Research Agenda. The draft agenda was based on the ACNM Research Priorities. The study was conducted by the ACNM Division of Research with assistance by the ACNM Staff Researcher.

Method:

Survey Development: A draft research agenda was developed by the ACNM Division of Research Board of Governors. This was content validated by 4 members of the ACNM DOR and the ACNM senior staff researcher to evaluate if it reflected these two documents appropriately. The survey was beta tested in January 2005 and minor revisions were implemented.

The survey included:

- Demographic data
- Data across three areas
 - General agreement with and ranking of the ACNM Strategic Priorities
 - Rating the importance of the specific research agenda items
 - Open-ended qualitative questions to clarify questions or issues about the document

Data analysis:

- Quantitative data were analyzed with Websurveyor software and SPSS 11.0
- Qualitative data were analyzed using Atlas.ti, Version 4.2 software and content analysis
- Based on the triangulation of the quantitative and qualitative data a conceptualization of the purposes and strategies of the ACNM Research Agenda was proposed

Sample:

A convenience sample was drawn from:

- ACNM BOD (individual email)
- Directors of Midwifery Education (listserve)
- Service Directors (listserve)
- Chapter Chairs (listserve)
- Members of the DOR (listserve)
- Selected staff of the ACNM National Office (individual email)

WebSurveyor was used to survey targeted members of the ACNM.

- 99 individuals requested the web survey by clicking on the web link
- Of those 75 responded (75.6% on line response rate)

Findings:

Most respondents were prepared at the masters level (67.7%), white (98.5%), worked in clinical practice (48.6%) or midwifery education (31.1%), and had been certified at least 11 years (67.6%). Responses were distributed somewhat evenly across the ACNM Regions with the most from Region V (26%) and least from Region VI (9.6%). The ranking of the strategic priorities was split with policy and research/evidence-based practice receiving the highest ranks. There was a 93.2% agreement with the current purpose of the ACNM Research Agenda (Table 1). A complete review of findings is in Appendix 1.

Table 1.

Ranking of the ACNM Strategic Priorities	
Respondents were asked to rank order the 6 current ACNM Strategic Priorities in terms of importance to research. (1=most important to 6=least important)	
Policy	22.6%
Research/evidence-based practice	22.5%
Visibility message	17.5%
Collaboration	15.2%
Education	12.3%
Organizational/leadership development	9.9%

Quantitative Analysis: The survey presented six focus areas for research based on the ACNM Strategic Priorities. Respondents were requested to indicate their beliefs about the level of importance of each strategic priority (1=extremely important to 6=not at all important). As might be expected, respondents indicated that most were important; however some were considered more important than others. The focus research areas are listed below. The underlined focus indicates the highest level of support by the respondents.

Policy:

Examine member's perceived barriers to practice
Critical analysis of state legislation
 Study thriving and struggling practices

Evidence-based Practice:

Collect clinical practice data
Research to link practice with outcomes
 Study women's decision-making about her provider
 Research about women's decision making regarding interventions and procedures during pregnancy and birth
 VBAC research
 Epidural research

Education:

Declining applicants to midwifery programs

Examine midwifery programs for common and discordant issues related to student applicants

Collaboration:

Explore collaborative practice environments of CNMS and CMs

Establish common research goals with MANA

Visibility/Message:

Describe what women believe about midwifery; how they learned about midwives

Describe what legislators believe about midwives

Describe what insurance executives believe about midwives (health and liability insurers)

Organization/Leadership:

Examine why or why not midwives join ACNM or why they leave the ACNM

Identify members' top priorities for research

Qualitative Analysis: Each of the survey questions provided opportunity for written comments. Content and thematic analysis identified three themes. These are listed below. The number in parentheses indicated the number of comments coded to this topic.

Supporting midwifery practice through research

- Barriers to midwifery practice (6)
- Evidence-based practice (9)
- Historical documentation (1)
- Preparation of midwives (3)
- Supporting research (6)
- Validation of midwifery practice (11)
- Midwifery Workforce (1)

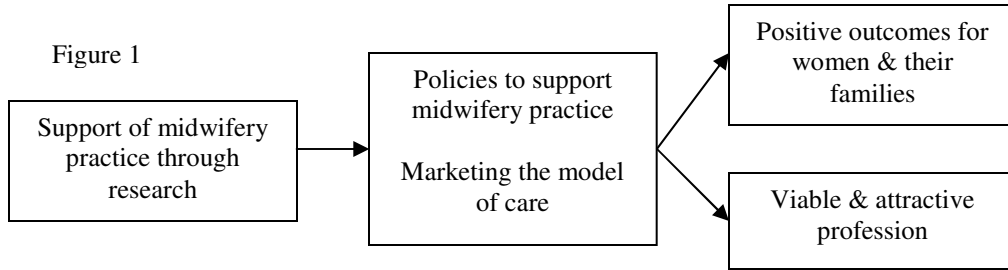
Policy development based on those research findings

- Collaboration (1)
- Liability issues (1)
- Policy issues (6)

Marketing midwifery based on research

- Status quo (1)
- Marketing midwifery (17)
- Women's choices and desires (3)

The quantitative and qualitative data were examined together to synthesize a conceptualization of a Research Agenda for the ACNM. This is presented in Figure 1.



Recommendations

The DOR recommends:

1. The Research Agenda (Appendix B) be accepted as a working document by the ACNM Board of Directors.
2. The Research Agenda be placed on the ACNM website with a link to the PPT presentation of the completed data. This will be announced in *Quickening*
3. The Research Agenda website should have a link for invited commentary about the research agenda. The Research Advisory Section of the DOR will monitor this commentary and report on it yearly to the BOD.
4. The DOR will submit a formal manuscript on this process and its results to the *Journal of Midwifery & Women's Health*.

Appendix 1.

Power Point Presentation of results

Appendix 2.

ACNM RESEARCH AGENDA (Final Proposal 6-3-05)	
<u>Research Priorities</u>	
Strategic Focus	
Policy:	<i>Pursue legislative, political and legal strategies to promote the hallmarks of midwifery as the standard for women's health care.</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Examine members' perceived barriers to practice. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Critical analysis of state legislation restrictive and conducive to midwifery practice. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify thriving and struggling midwifery services to examine their practice environment for common and discordant issues. This would include, but not be limited to reimbursement avenues, malpractice, credentialing processes, level of autonomy, regulation, and internal policies. 	
Research/Evidence-based Practice:	<i>Promote excellence in clinical midwifery practice that is founded on the best available research evidence.</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a systematic approach to collecting clinical practice data across the membership. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote research that describes and links midwifery processes of care to specific outcomes. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe women's decision-making processes on choice of provider and procedures during pregnancy and birth. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of research on VBAC and epidurals. 	
Education:	<i>Provide a strong foundation for midwifery practice and women's health through basic midwifery education programs, continuing education and the education of consumers.</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe the reasons for the declining pool of midwifery applicants. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Examine schools with thriving and struggling applicant pools for common and discordant issues. 	
Collaboration:	<i>Strengthen coalitions with individuals, organizations and agencies that focus on or impact women's health (physicians, other midwives, nurses, other health professions, government agencies, non government agencies etc).</i>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore practice environments where collaboration is especially strong among differently prepared and licensed midwives. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish a common research goal with the MANA Board of Directors. 	
Visibility/Message:	<i>Increase visibility and demand for midwifery services and a midwifery model of health care.</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe what women believe, and how they learned, about midwives and midwifery practice. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe what legislators and insurance (both health reimbursement & liability) executives believe, and how they learned, about midwives and midwifery practice. 	
Organizational/Leadership Development:	<i>Enhance communication and optimal functioning among and between ACNM's members, volunteer leaders and staff.</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Examine the reasons midwives (a) do not join, or (b) leave the ACNM 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify each member's top priority to be addressed by the ACNM 	