

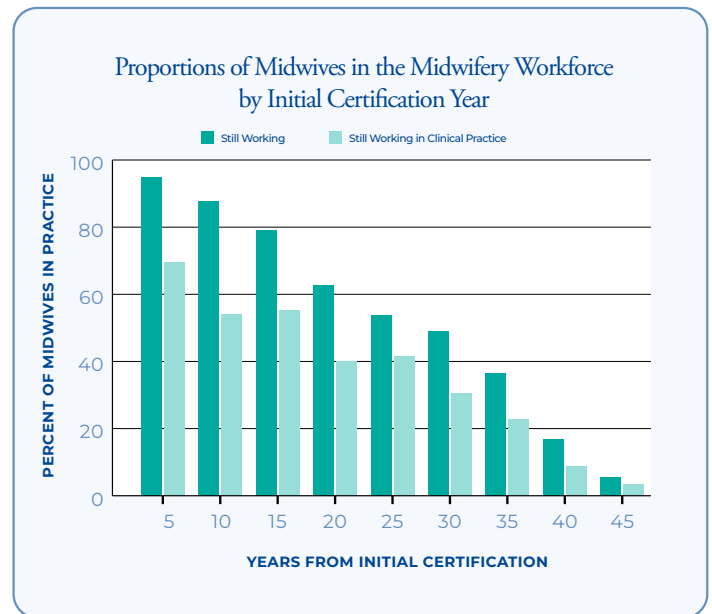
What is the rate over time that midwives leave clinical practice?

ANALYSIS:

Data from the American Midwifery Certification Board (AMCB) for CNMs and CMs seeking recertification from 2016-2020 were used to illustrate patterns in the number of advanced practice midwives employed overall and the number providing clinical care. Proportions were calculated for each year past initial certification (1972-2015), based on the total number of AMCB-certified midwives for each year. Finally, data were grouped by years from first certification.

RESULT:

The proportion of midwives who continued in the workforce in each subsequent certification cycle decreased linearly. Attrition from clinical practice occurred early, with 30% of midwives leaving clinical practice by the first 5-year certification cycle. Nearly half of all midwives left clinical practice within 10 years after initial certification.



Proportions of Midwives in the Workforce, by the number of years from initial certification

YEARS	Still in the Workforce		Still in Clinical Practice	
	MEAN	RANGE	MEAN	RANGE
5	94.8%	94 – 96%	69.6%	66 – 71%
10	87.8%	84 – 92%	54.1%	45 – 68%
15	79.2%	70 – 85%	55.4%	34 – 71%
20	62.8%	57 – 67%	40.1%	25 – 50%
25	53.8%	51 – 60%	41.6%	39 – 46%
30	49.0%	45 – 55%	30.5%	22 – 41%
35	36.4%	25 – 48%	22.9%	12 – 27%
40	16.8%	13 – 20%	8.7%	6 – 11%
45	5.4%	1 – 9%	3.5%	0.2 – 7%

IMPLICATIONS

Estimates of the growth of the midwifery workforce should account for midwives leaving clinical practice. Further research should identify whether and why subsets of midwives may experience higher rates of attrition.

Legislative and organizational advocacy should be informed by research identifying conditions that contribute to high rates of attrition from clinical practice.