



Nina has been working as a midwife since 2003 at the Norfolk and Norwich University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust.

Nina has shared her journey to becoming a Specialist Midwife and has provided advice to anyone considering a career in midwifery.



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TRUST DOCS ID: 17787

ISSUE DATE 18/09/2024

How did you get into your current role as a Diabetes Specialist Midwife?

At school I was interested in Art and Design and I became a member of a volunteering charity which led me to spend two months in Sri Lanka between my 1st and 2nd years of Sixth Form. This involved me mainly partaking in construction work to build a school in the slums of Colombo. Whilst there I became involved with a local Doctor and would spend my free time assisting with monitoring and treating pregnant mothers and new-born babies for nutrition, illnesses, and disease. I came home and ended up leaving with no A-Levels. I completed two more projects in Sri Lanka and Ghana before applying for a Midwifery Diploma of Higher Education at UEA at 18.

I completed the course in 2003 and worked as a rotational Midwife until I applied for the role as lead midwife for diabetes in pregnancy (Diabetes Specialist Midwife.) I now look after pregnant women with any type of diabetes in pregnancy. My role includes clinical work in all areas, service improvement, guideline writing and I am an associate tutor for diabetes in pregnancy at the UEA.

What challenges have you faced during your role?

Initially being a Newly Qualified Midwife was daunting as I was rotating around different areas very quickly. I felt that I should really enjoy natural and 'normal' Midwifery but was instead drawn to very complicated and high risk Midwifery which at first I felt guilty about but now I embrace it!

When I got my current job as a Diabetes Specialist Midwife it was very unnerving as I had a lot more responsibilities which I had to learn and adapt to in a short space of time. I also had to complete certain competencies so I could alter medication doses and even completed University learning for the first time since my midwifery diploma!

What is your favourite part of your job?

I am extremely passionate about diabetes in pregnancy and making sure all of my patients feel safe and comfortable in what is a very high risk time of their lives. I feel strongly that people with lots of complications should still experience the amazing miracle of pregnancy with lots of positives. I love being able to have continuity (getting to see the same woman over and over throughout her pregnancy) and getting to know my patients. I don't object to them calling or emailing me as this allows me to know that they can trust me and my advice as I now have lots of experience and knowledge in this area. I surprisingly love teaching people about diabetes which I never thought I would do! It is a subject people tend to find complicated and boring but I find it interesting so although it is a challenge I really enjoy it!



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What surprised you/what were you unaware of until you began working in your job?

I did not know a lot about the anatomy of midwifery before starting my training so I was very surprised about how amazing the human body is! I did not fully understand until I completed my training how much psychology, mental health and emotional well-being play a part in every aspect of midwifery as I thought it would be mostly physical.

In my current role I was surprised about quite how many different ways Diabetes or any type of complication can affect a patient. They can have years of treatment prior to being pregnant, they may have had diabetes from childhood which could have caused complications. I realised very quickly in these situations the patient will always know more about their diabetes than I will! I didn't realise how quickly research progresses and changes and how much care is evolving- it is both confusing and fascinating!

What would you tell other people who are considering a career in a Midwifery setting?

It's hard! It's not at all like it is on TV, luckily my mum was a Midwife so she told it to me straight away meaning I knew it would be a challenge. But a challenge, once overcome, is so rewarding! I am normally reasonably sensible but after what I experienced in Sri Lanka I went with my gut and chose a job I never would have thought would be right for me. I had no A-Levels and struggled academically however I knew I could do it with some effort and I did. I have found a part of the job I am particularly passionate about and which provides me with so much excitement and interest that I would never consider doing another job. I get so much joy from being a Diabetes Specialist Midwife even if it is not the 'traditional' midwife role I still knew this was made for me. Sometimes I can't believe I actually get paid to do this!

Where do you see yourself in 10 years' time? What would you like to achieve?

I would like to be doing the exact same job! But I would like to have been able to inspire other midwives to become interested in diabetes. I would like to have made advances in diabetes technology so that women with pre-existing diabetes can experience a lower risk and natural pregnancy as much as possible. I would love for other midwives to experience what I get to experience in a working day as a Diabetes Specialist Midwife - it's fantastic!