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**Challenges and changes in Midwifery  
practice in Aotearoa/New Zealand.  
Pasifika women assessing primary  
maternity units  
A pilot study.**

# Aim of Study

- To uncover why ‘low risk’ Pasifika women in Counties Manukau Area do not birth at primary units.
- To foster research skills and capacity in a Pasifika midwifery student



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# Why undertake the study?

In Counties Manukau catchment area approximately **38%** of the pregnant women in any given year are **Pasifika** (Jackson, 2011).

Pasifika woman (71.5%) along with Maori women (74.9%) are **more likely to have a spontaneous birth.**

However, **the majority of Pasifika women give birth in tertiary hospitals (65%)** rather than primary settings (Ministry of Health, 2012).

The evidence is clear that **for ‘low risk women’ it is safer to birth in primary units** (Birthplace in England Collaborative Group (2011), Davis et, al (2011)).

# Who did we interview?

	Booked with LMC	Profile
1 <sup>st</sup> Participant	First Trimester	Four children. NZ resident came to NZ to have baby. Healthy- Normal birth no complications
2 <sup>nd</sup> Participant	8 weeks	First Baby. NZ resident lives here. Healthy- Normal birth no complications
3 <sup>rd</sup> Participant	First Trimester?	NZ born Samoan. Three children. Healthy normal birth no complications
4 <sup>th</sup> Participant	?	NZ born Tongan. 1 <sup>st</sup> Baby. Healthy normal birth no complications
5 <sup>th</sup> Participant	6 weeks	NZ born. 1 <sup>st</sup> Baby. Healthy, induction, epidural, normal birth.
6 <sup>th</sup> Participant	?	NZ born. 3 <sup>rd</sup> Baby. Health normal birth no complications



**What did we learn about ‘low risk’  
Pasifika women and primary birthing units  
?**

# I didn't know

“Really you can have babies at the maternity units? ...**I didn't know that at all.**”

“**No one talked really about there being a choice** about where to have baby, no, no choices were given. The midwife mentioned Middlemore but no didn't mention Papakura but I went there after birth of baby.”

To be honest until you guys (the researchers) told me I thought those units **were there for you to go to and recover after having your baby.**



# First baby in New Zealand

I went to Middlemore and had my baby and then went to Papakura after that. I didn't know I could have my baby at Papakura. My midwife told me to go to Middlemore that is why I went there. For me though I think I would choose Middlemore, because this is the first baby I have had in this country. In fact if I have another baby I would still go to Middlemore.”





## It is closest

“Yes my midwife gave me the choices of Botany birthing care, or Middlemore or Papakura. But I always—I knew that if I ever fell pregnant I wanted to have the baby in Middlemore, just because it’s convenient because Middlemore’s closest. And probably—mainly because it’s closest and so my family or my mum could easily come and see me, and it was right there.

“The reason I go to Middlemore is because it is close to where we live. I have no problem to go anywhere else but why when this is the closest? Yes if a primary unit was closest to me of course I would go there as I have no worries about me or my baby.

# Middlemore is a hospital and that is where you give birth isn't it?

**Middlemore it's a hospital, so that is where you give birth isn't it—** yeah, you have to give birth at hospitals don't you? With my next baby if I have one I would love to do something different like try a water birth but I'd probably still have it at Middlemore, because it's the main place that I have given birth to with my three children.





# Friends and Family

but she gives birth here. I always talk to her, and she said, **Oh it's really nice, She would give birth at Middlemore and then go back to the Islands so I did too.**

Actually all my friends were like, Don't go to Middlemore, they were all, Go to Auckland. I don't know if that's just because it's in South Auckland, but they all birthed at Auckland even though they live in South Auckland. For me Middlemore was an awesome experience and I am normally sceptical about things, my husband always says I am high maintenance but I am not!

**My mum, she had my brother at Middlemore** and one of my friends—yeah they've all mostly had it at Middlemore, that I know of, so that is what I know so I had my baby at Middlemore.

# I love Middlemore



- Middlemore – the service is better the staff are friendly and kind they were very nice.
- But yeah Middlemore is amazing, everyone, the staff were amazing and they just made me feel really looked after.
- My midwife was great really nice and mellow but I think I had the right midwives at right time to help me...the pushing part, because if I'd had the mellow midwife I would've just been like "Get the vacuum, suck him out please" and she may have just being saying you "You can do it" whereas the amazing midwife at Middlemore she was really on to it and made it very clear to me I was going to push the baby out !



# What we discovered is that we have a problem

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- Lack of choice because that is where the my midwife prefers
- Lack of knowing about birthing options
- Low risk healthy women not being informed about where best for them to birth
- Culture of “ we birth at Middlemore and that is where you have babies.”
- No birthing unit close to where women live
- Middlemore staff ‘so awesome’ why would you go anywhere else (not really a problem)

We were also given an unexpected gift





# Some things we like about being cared for by a midwife in New Zealand

- At this birth my husband got to cut the cord – we feel very happy here as we are involved. My husband feels happy to cut the cord and that he had come from the Island for the birth.
- At this birth my husband got to cut the cord we feel very happy we are involved The Midwife she really explained to me about things like with the cord hey ask us if we want to cut it. Getting permission from us was great



## Midwifery services in New Zealand are very user-friendly (the midwife comes to you)

- I went with the community midwife because she actually come and visited me in my house. It is really good thing not to have to come to clinic and I wanted a midwife who could come to my home
- Otherwise it was hard for me because I'm not driving, and we only have one car and my husband's working as well, so he's got no time to come and drop me off. So it was easy, really easy for the midwife to come



# Midwives and staff are kind and nice and makes it a good experience

- At the hospital the midwives and staff are kind and that makes it a good experience
- Yes it took a while for contractions to get going and the midwife had to go off but she handed over to another midwife and she also was so nice and she helped me do so many things. Also the student they were both so nice and kind to me. They helped me so so much.
- You know it makes a difference when people nice and kind makes you feel good yes.



# Challenges

- It was clear to us that the woman who took part in our research, their mothers, aunties, sisters, friends and community are experts at birthing and trusting their bodies to birth and deserve to be given the full evidence about 'place of birth' and birthing outcomes for healthy low risk women.
- How to provide safe passage?

So it is time for the challenges to bring about changes

- For maternity service providers to work with Pasifika women, their families and their communities to understand their specific perspectives and needs.



The future... 'low risk' Pasifika women

