

Applying a Health Care Planning Model to Midwifery: Evidence from Germany and New Zealand

¹ Charité - Universitätsmedizin Berlin, Institute of Midwifery
² Auckland University of Technology, School of Acute and Primary Health
³ Jade University of Applied Sciences Oldenburg, Institute for Applied Photogrammetry and Geoinformatics

Background

- Equitable access to midwifery care is crucial but **planning systems vary widely between countries.**¹
- New Zealand:** National coordinated approach through an integrated system of primary, secondary and tertiary maternity care (*Primary Maternity Services Notice 2021*)
- Germany:** No dedicated planning tool → no demand-oriented workforce planning.
- Aim:** Compare planning approaches and assess their effect on distribution and accessibility.

Methods

Data

- New Zealand – Midwifery Council register & national statistics
- Germany – DHV register & population statistics

Tool: Adapted German physician demand planning guideline (BPL-RL)

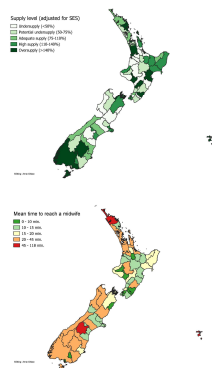
Analysis

- Midwife-to-women of reproductive age ratio
- GIS mapping of spatial accessibility
- Adjustment for socioeconomic deprivation (GISD & NZDep)

Results

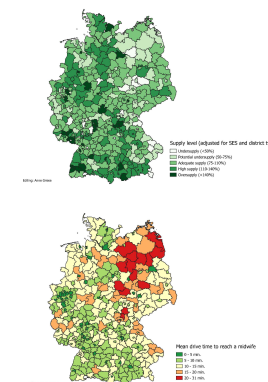
New Zealand:

- 3,214 practising midwives
- Supply ratio: **382 women per midwife.**
- Coverage varied from **0% (no midwives) to 317%.**
- Median travel time: **15.7 min**, but up to **118.5 min.** (Chatham Islands).
- No significant correlation between deprivation and coverage.**



Germany:

- 17,792 actively practising midwives
- Supply ratio: **960 women per midwife.**
- Coverage varied from **0% to 259%.**
- Median travel time: **9.6 min**, max. **30.7 min.**
- Negative correlation between deprivation and coverage** ($r \approx -0.30$).



Conclusion

Germany: Almost one quarter of districts undersupplied; access worse in rural & deprived regions.

New Zealand: Despite geographic challenges, central register + planning ensure no SES gradient.

Equity implication: Systematic planning & SES-adjusted benchmarks are essential to prevent inequalities.

Policy: Germany needs a national midwifery register + demand planning framework inspired by international best practice.

References

¹Sandall J, Fernandez Turienzo C, Devane D, Soltani H, Gillespie P, Gates S, Jones LV, Shennan AH, Rayment-Jones H. Midwife continuity of care models versus other models of care for childbearing women (2024). Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews, Issue 4. Art. No.: CD004667. DOI: 10.1002/14651858.CD004667

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