

Green midwifery in action: strengthening existing best practices for sustainability in Dutch primary midwifery care.

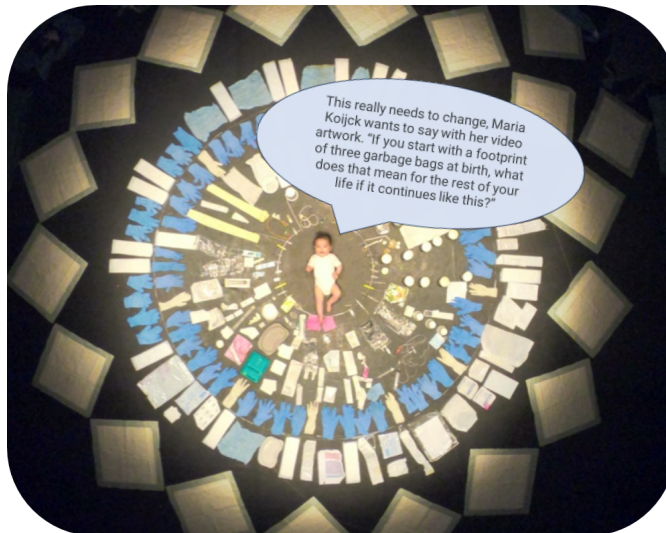
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The aim of this poster

The aim of this poster is to **Inform**, **Inspire** and **Involve** midwives in the transition toward sustainable healthcare.



Background

Midwives play a vital role in mitigating and adapting to climate change by protecting, preserving, and promoting health. Their holistic, preventive approach aligns naturally with the goals of planetary health. In the Netherlands, many midwives are already implementing sustainable practices—often independently—yet the healthcare sector remains one of the most environmentally harmful sectors, contributing 7% of national CO₂ emissions. With-in maternity care, no structured implementation plan exists to scale up and support these green efforts.

Objectives

This project aimed to (1) identify and highlight existing green best practices among Dutch midwives based on the five pillars of the Green Deal Sustainable Care 2022, and (2) co-create an evidence-informed implementation plan for sustainable practice with midwives and stakeholders.

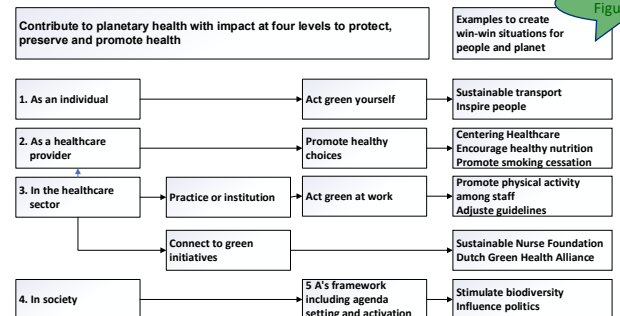
Methods

Twelve semi-structured interviews were conducted with nine primary care midwives between February 2023 and March 2024. Interviews explored sustainability at four levels: personal, professional, organisational, and societal. Data were thematically analysed using Atlas.TI. Extracted best practices were critically reviewed for scientific grounding and feasibility.



Results

Dutch midwives are already contributing significantly to sustainable care across various domains. Two overarching themes emerged: (1) Navigating trade-offs (e.g., sustainability vs. hygiene or comfort) and (2) Building awareness and knowledge among midwives and women. A broad set of best practices was compiled, reflecting the leadership midwives are already taking and addressing additional actions at personal, clinical, organizational, and societal levels to contribute to planetary health.



Conclusions

Midwives are frontrunners in sustainable healthcare. This project supports their efforts by providing a structured, evidence-informed implementation plan. The plan will be shared with the Royal Organisation of Dutch Midwives and integrated into educational programs.

Key message

Midwives are already acting as change agents for sustainable health. Strengthening and scaling these best practices supports both environmental and maternal health.



Ethics and Conflicts of Interest

Official approval of this study was not required according to the Dutch law. There were no psychological risks associated with the interviews. Participants provided written informed consent, and data were anonymized in compliance with the Dutch Protection Act for Personal Data. Secure data storage measures were implemented to safeguard participant confidentiality and data integrity. This project was carried out with funding from SIA KIEM. Project number: KIEM.K23.01.138 The authors declare to have no conflict of interests.

Curious?

Would you like to know more?

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