

**Perceived Changes in the Knowledge and Confidence of Doctors and  
Midwives to Manage Obstetric Emergencies following Completion  
of an Advanced Life Support in Obstetrics (ALSO) Course in  
Australia.**

By

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**This thesis is submitted as a partial fulfillment for the Degree of Masters of  
Research (with training) at School of Nursing and Midwifery, Murdoch  
University.**

**I declare that this thesis is my own account of my research and contains as its main content work which has not previously been submitted for a degree at any tertiary education institution.**

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**Signature.....**

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## Abstract

**Aims:** This study investigated perceived changes in knowledge and confidence to manage specific obstetric emergency situations following completion of an Advanced Life Support in Obstetrics (ALSO) course in Australia.

**Methodology:** A prospective repeated measures survey design was employed using three questionnaires. From a sampling frame of all course attendees from May to September 2010 throughout Australia ( $N = 242$ ), 68% ( $n = 165$ ) completed pre- and immediate post-course questionnaires, and 61% ( $n = 101$ ) completed a six-week post-course questionnaire. Descriptive statistics were reported as median and interquartile range. Statistical data were analysed using a Friedman two way repeated measures analysis of variance and the Wilcoxon signed rank test. All  $p$  levels lower than .05 were considered significant.

**Results:** There was a significant overall improvement in perceived knowledge and confidence of the recommended management of all 17 emergency situations immediately post-course ( $p < .001$ ) and at six weeks post-course ( $p < .001$ ) when compared to pre-course levels. However, a significant decrease in knowledge and confidence for many emergency situations from immediately post-course to six weeks post-course ( $p < .05$ ) was also observed. The midwives believed the interprofessional aspects of the course had increased their ability to learn ( $p = .014$ ) and practise new skills ( $p < .001$ ), work as a team member ( $p = .002$ ) and communicate effectively with different professional colleagues ( $p = .008$ ), whereas the doctors experienced no significant changes in their beliefs regarding these variables. The midwives also significantly increased their confidence in all four aspects of interprofessional interaction measured at six weeks following the course ( $p < .001$ ), whereas the doctors

only perceived a significant increase in confidence that their clinical decisions were respected by the midwives with whom they worked ( $p = .016$ ).

**Conclusions:** These results indicate that completion of the ALSO course in Australia has a positive effect on the knowledge and confidence of doctors and midwives to manage obstetric emergencies. There was also evidence that the course influenced midwives' confidence when working and communicating within an interprofessional team.

*Keywords:* Advanced Life Support in Obstetrics,  
doctors, midwives, knowledge, confidence,  
interprofessional team, obstetric emergencies.

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