

EDITORIAL

Dear Members,

Once again pen has been put to paper and the completion of another newsletter has been achieved. This has not been an easy task, so am encouraging you all to contribute towards this newsletter, in order for it to remain as a useful source of information and have our presence felt within our own environment.

Next month is a special month for all us midwives, as the 5th of May marks 'The International Day of the Midwife'.

This day is celebrated by all midwives around the world. The International Confederation of Midwives (ICM), established the idea of the 'International Day of the Midwife' following discussion among member associations in the late 1980's, then launched the initiative

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President's Letter

Dear colleagues,

In the name of the new council, following the Annual General meeting, of the 25 February, we all hope that you had a peaceful Easter, with your families and friends. I would also like to welcome, Ms. Michelle Galea, as a new Council member. We are starting with our Educational activities; the first one is to celebrate the International Day of the Midwife. What could be better than encouraging midwives to be the advocates of the unborn child? Further details are found in the newsletter.

In the past week we have witnessed the death and burial of our beloved His Holiness Pope John the second. Our Pope has moved the whole world, Catholics, Orthodox, Muslims, Jews, Hindus, all the nations. For the first time in history, the US president and the Patriarch of Constantinople attended a Pope's funeral. He has made history, he has changed history with his humility, strength of will and love for humanity. During this past week, I feel that the media's features of the Pope's life and his work which many of us may not have been aware of, was instrumental in bringing closer the nations of the world; if not maybe for ever at least for this period in history.

The Pope is a model for all of us, midwives. His complete dedication to helping humanity through his role, has ended the cold wars, and brought the churches much closer together. We too can, with our dedication, collaboration and support, to one another and to our clients, help to create a healthier society. We can be instrumental in protecting the unborn child, in creating better alliances with other co-workers, obstetricians and nurses, amongst others. If we work with dedication and dignity towards the preservation and enhancing of life we too can leave a mark of love in the hearts of others, the greatest gift we can share with all humanity. We all hope to see you all at the Seminar of the 6th May.

Rita Borg Xuereb

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formally in 1992. The 5th May 2005 will be the 14th International Day of the Midwife.

The aim of this day is to celebrate midwifery and to bring an awareness of the importance of the midwife's work to as many people as possible. This is an occasion for every individual midwife to think about the many others in the profession – even just the people whom we work with on a daily basis – to make new contacts within and outside midwifery and widen the knowledge of what midwives do.

The Malta Midwives Association in collaboration with 'The Movement for the Rights, Protection and Development of the Unborn Child' are holding a high profile National Conference on the 6th May 2005. Everyone is encouraged to attend as this shall be a good learning experience. See you all at the conference and do keep In-Touch.

"It is a poverty to decide that an unborn child must die so that you may live as you like."

Mother Theresa



Alexia 😊



We would like to congratulate our treasurer Ms. Nathalie Zammit on becoming great aunt to such a sweet baby girl. She was born at the end of last year in Australia.

THE INTERNATIONAL DAY OF THE MIDWIFE

6th May 2005 shall be seeing the organisation of a high profile conference being organised by the The Malta Midwives' Association in collaboration with The Movement for the Rights, Protection and Development of the Unborn Child. The focus of this National Conference shall be 'THE WELL-BEING OF THE UNBORN CHILD'.

This focus has been chosen as the theme for World Health Day 2005 in Malta is 'Make every Mother and Child count'. Also as stated in the press release issued by the Department of Information, the Minister of Health states that "The Health Division through the Health Promotion Department is taking a number of initiatives to provide mothers with the necessary information to be aware of problems related to pregnancy and the post-natal period. The Department has issued various publications about this issue and over the past year was a founder member of *The wellbeing of the Unborn Child* movement together with another 36 organisations.

The aim of this movement is to increase awareness about the importance of healthy pre-conception lifestyles and the choices one makes during pregnancy to ensure that the unborn child is given what is needed to get a healthy start to life. The Department is also campaigning on healthy eating and the benefits of breastfeeding".





THE INTERNATIONAL DAY OF THE MIDWIFE



Niehu Hsiebek Jien

The Malta Midwives' Association

In collaboration with

The Movement for the Rights, Protection and Development of the Unborn Child

National Conference

THE WELL-BEING OF THE UNBORN CHILD

Friday, 6th May, 2005.

At Ir-Razzett Tal-Hbiberija – Marsaskala

Chaired By Ms. Nathalie Zammit. Manager Midwifery Services KGH/SLH

- 08.30-09.00 Registration
- 09.00-09.10 Opening Speech
Hon. Dr. Tonio Borg Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Justice and Home Affairs
- 09.10-09.18 Introductory Speech.
Mrs. Rita Borg Xuereb President of the Malta Midwives' Association
- 09.18-09.25 Speech: The Movement for the Rights, Protection and Development of the Unborn Child
Mr. Gino Axisa President, Social Assistance Secretariat - on behalf of the Movement for the Rights, Protection and Development of the Unborn Child
- 09.25-09.40 Presentation 1: Legal Aspects on the Rights of the Unborn Child
Magistrate Consuelo Scerri Herrera – Courts of Justice
- 09.40-09.55 Presentation 2.: Pregnant Women at Risk of Substance Misuse
Dr. Anna Maria Vella – Aġenzija Sedqa
- 10.00-10.20 Coffee Break

- 10.20-11.35 Workshop 1. Legal Aspects on the Rights of the Unborn Child
- Workshop A: Chair: Dr. Justin Fenech LL.D
The role of legislation and the judiciary with regards to the rights of the unborn child
- Workshop B: Chair: Mr. Joe Gerada CEO, Foundation for Social Welfare Services
The responsibility of the family with regards to the rights of the unborn child
- Workshop 2. Health Problems
- Chair: Ms. Mary Anne Massa - Pricipal Officer - Health Promotion
Promoting a healthy environment for the unborn child (substance abuse and misuse, fatherhood and teenagers)
- 11.35-12.20 Feedback and Questions
- 12.30-14.00 Lunch.
- 14.00-14.10 Speech
Ms. Mary Louise Coleiro. Shadow Minister, The Family and Social Solidarity
- 14.10-14.25 Presentation 3: The Psychological needs of the Unborn Child
Mr. Martin Ward – Consultant Psychiatric Nurse
- 14.25-14.40 Presentation 4: The Well-being of the Unborn Child
Mr. Albert P. Scerri – Consultant Obstetrician & Gynaecologist, KGH/SLH
- 14.40- 15.30 Workshop 3. The Psychological Needs of the Unborn Child
- Workshop A: Chair: Rev. Father Joseph Calleja, Chaplin SLH
Spiritual & Psychological well-being of the mother: effects on the mother
- Workshop B: Chair: Dr. Mark Gauci, CEO Occupational Health & Safety Authority
The Work Environment: Can it affect the unborn Child?
- Workshop C Chair: Mr. Tony Mifsud, Former Director Department of Family Welfare
Social Support Services & Education
- 15.30-16.15 Feedback & Questions
- 16.15-16.25 Speech
Ms. Sonia Camilleri, Commissioner for Children
- 16.25-16.35 Closing Speech
Hon. Clyde Puli, Chairperson Social Affairs Committee – House of Representatives
- 16.35-17.00 Distribution of Certificates

INTERNATIONAL PAGE

"It just feels like the right thing to do. It makes you feel so special and so close to the baby"

New survey shows that men are supportive of breastfeeding mums

UK National Breastfeeding Awareness Week 2005

UK National Breastfeeding Awareness Week 2005 is taking place between 8th to 14th May. The first UK National Breastfeeding Awareness Week was in 1993.

Coordinated by the Department of Health, the week aims to highlight that breastfeeding is good for the health of mother and baby. We would like women to recognize their right to breastfeed anytime and anywhere and for friends, family and health professionals to provide support for breastfeeding.

In 2004 the campaign particularly focused on younger mothers and low-income families as these groups have the lowest breastfeeding rates.

New research has revealed that, despite popular belief, the majority of men are supportive of breastfeeding, with 79% of those surveyed saying that they would want their children to be breastfed.

The survey was commissioned by The Department of Health (1) to support National Breastfeeding Awareness Week 2005, an annual awareness campaign that forms part of the Governments' wider efforts to promote breastfeeding. The survey builds on previous year's campaigns and aims to further dispel the myths (2) that surround breastfeeding.

UK National Breastfeeding Awareness Week 2005 aims to promote the benefits of breastfeeding and encourage more mums to give it a go. This year, the awareness campaign (8-14th May) will focus on the importance of support during breastfeeding from those closest to mothers: partners, peers and family members.

In 2005, Hollywood star Courteney Cox-Arquette has spoken out in favour of the campaign, giving encouragement to all new mums: "Breastfeeding is undoubtedly the best thing you can do for your baby. It took a lot of persevering through the early weeks because my daughter did not latch on properly, and, honestly, it really hurt. But I am so happy I stayed with it because not only do I have a special bond with my child, but it's so easy now and she is extremely healthy."

In previous years, National Breastfeeding Awareness Week has gained the support of numerous celebrities including Davina McCall, Donna Air and Fiona Phillips

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The survey reveals that:

- 79% of men would want their child to be breastfed
- Nearly 2/3 of men agree that breastmilk is the best food for babies
- 71% of men would feel comfortable about their partner breastfeeding
- 56% of men would try to influence/advise their partner about whether or not to breastfeed

The benefits of breastfeeding for mother and baby include:

- The perfect nutrition for baby for first 6 months
- Protects baby against tummy bugs, chest infections, asthma, eczema and allergies
- Helps mum regain shape using an additional 500 calories a day
- Breastmilk can be expressed so everyone can help with feeding
- Helps develop a strong bond with baby
- Helps the womb return to normal
- Reduces the risk of premenopausal breast and ovarian cancer

Notes:

- (1) The survey was undertaken by NOP World, 21-23, 28-30 January 2005 amongst 427 male respondents aged 18 to 46
- (2) Infant Feeding Survey 2000
- (3) World Health Organisation www.who.int
- (4) The government's Priority and Planning Framework 2003-2006 requires an increase in breastfeeding initiation rates by two percentage points per year

The UK has one of the lowest breastfeeding rates in Europe. Almost a third of women (29%) in England and Wales (3) never try to breastfeed compared to 2% in Sweden (4). As a result, in 2003 the government set targets for all Primary Care Trusts (PCTs) to increase the amount of women taking up breastfeeding by 2% per year, focusing especially on women from disadvantaged groups(5).

Christine Carson, National Infant Feeding Advisor said: "We encourage every new mum to try breastfeeding. Sometimes it may not be easy, but with the right advice, support and encouragement, particularly from those closest to them, we hope to see a marked increase in the amount of mothers and their babies experiencing the many benefits that breastfeeding brings.

The decision to breastfeed can make a huge contribution to infant health and development as well as benefiting mums. Breastfeeding is often depicted or described as something exclusively for mother and baby, but this is not the case. The more support and encouragement a new mum has the more likely she is to give breastfeeding a go.

This survey shows that the majority of men are not only in favour of breastfeeding, but that a substantial majority agrees that breastmilk is the best food a baby can have.

A Mother's Prayer For Her Unborn Child

*Lord, be with my baby as it grows inside me
I'm a mother-to-be and this I pray to you
Please lend your strength to my baby's heart
So it can beat strong and give my baby life
Please allow my baby to have strong lungs
So I can hear that first cry loud & clear
Please give my baby the spongiest brain you have
So it can soak up everything I have to teach
Please help my baby's organs to develop fully
So I can take my baby home with me
Please place your hands on my baby's eyes
So I can show my baby the world
Please give my baby two ears that can hear
So my baby can hear how much love I have
Please allow my baby to have a nose that smells
So I can show my baby all the wonderful scents
the world has
Please give my baby lips, a tongue, & a mouth
So I can teach my baby to speak
Please give my baby two legs
So my baby can learn to walk through the world
Please give my baby two arms
So I can hold my baby's hand as we stroll
Please let my baby have ten fingers and ten toes
So I can count them as most new mummy's do
Please help my baby to be happy and healthy
So my baby can enjoy a full and wonderful life
Lord, be with my baby as it grows inside me
I'm a mother-to-be and this I pray to you*

Amen

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