

# Debra Bick - Midwife/ Professor of Clinical Trials in Maternal Health



I am a full-time researcher and academic, based at the University of Warwick and University Hospitals Coventry and Warwickshire NHS Trust. My research 'journey' commenced over 25 years ago when, as a clinical midwife, I was offered a secondment opportunity to work at the University of Birmingham on one of the first studies to assess the impacts of pregnancy and birth on maternal health. I enjoyed the research so much that I completed a Master's degree and a PhD, and have been involved in research ever since. My PhD study found the first evidence of the widespread and persistent nature of some maternal health problems after giving birth.

I work closely with multi-disciplinary teams, including women and their families, obstetricians, midwives, physicians, anaesthetists, GPs and psychiatrists. In more recent years, I have worked on quantitative and qualitative studies to support outcomes of women with more complex pregnancies, as a result of cardiac disease, high blood pressure, diabetes or being overweight or obese at pregnancy commencement. Postnatal support is also crucial and I continue to develop and lead clinical trials to improve the care all women and their families receive.

One of my most enjoyable activities is supervising Masters and PhD students. My PhD students have gone on to lead their own research programmes or to high profile roles leading national and international maternal health programmes, for example at the World Health Organisation and Department of Health. Many of my current PhD students are funded by NIHR doctoral and clinical doctoral fellowships, and I am currently mentoring four midwives awarded nationally competitive NIHR Pre-doctoral Clinical Academic Fellowships. Given the importance of midwifery care to support better birth outcomes, developing clinical and academic careers is essential.

Working with midwifery and obstetric colleagues at UHCW is resulting in fantastic opportunities to support and develop the next generation of midwife researchers and leaders, and ensure our clinical trials continue to reflect the needs of women giving birth and their families.

