

The overview of postgraduate thesis within the department of midwifery site (2004-2017) in Turkey

Türkiye’de ebelik anabilim dalında yapılan (2004-2017) lisansüstü tezlerin incelenmesi

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ABSTRACT

Aim: The aim of this study is to examine postgraduate thesis in the department of midwifery in Turkey.

Material and Method: A qualitative research conducted and the data were collected by means of document analysis. The number of 156 theses, which were enrolled in the National Thesis Center of the Council of Higher Education between the years of 2004-2017 are classified in terms of various variables. Theses are examined using a form by researchers. The collected data are expressed in numbers and percentages.

Results: The results of the research showed that, total number of theses were prepared in midwifery department as master thesis and most of them were belong to Ege University (n: 29). Theses were measuring; perception, attitude, skill and problem in descriptive studies (n: 71). The most submitted number of thesis were in the year of 2016 (n: 29). The largest number of sample were chosen as pregnant (n: 54).

Conclusion: We believe that the outcomes of this research will shed light on the future of midwifery research and provide insight for new researches in the field.

Keywords: Midwifery, doctorate, master of science, postgraduate thesis

ÖZ

Amaç: Bu çalışmanın amacı, Türkiye’de ebelik anabilim dalı alanında yapılmış lisansüstü tezlerin incelenmesidir.

Gereç ve Yöntem: Araştırma nitel bir araştırma olup veriler doküman analizi yöntemiyle toplanmıştır. Yükseköğretim Kurulu Ulusal Tez Merkezi’nde ebelik alanına kayıtlı, 2004-2017 yılları arasında yapılan 156 tez çeşitli değişkenler açısından incelenmiştir. Ulaşılan tezleri incelemek üzere araştırmacılar tarafından değişkenlerin yer aldığı bir form kullanılmıştır. Veriler sayı ve yüzde olarak ifade edilmiştir.

Bulgular: Tezlerin tamamının yüksek lisans tezi olduğu, en çok tezin Ege Üniversitesi’ne (n: 29) ait olduğu, en fazla tezin 2016 yılında (n: 29) hazırlandığı, çalışılan tez konularının en çok algı, tutum, beceri, sorun ölçen (n: 33) tanımlayıcı çalışmalar (n: 71) olduğu ve tezlerde örneklem olarak en çok gebelerin (n: 54) seçildiği saptanmıştır.

Sonuç: Bu araştırma ile elde edilen verilerin gelecek ebelik araştırmalarına ışık tutacağı ve yeni araştırmalar için fikir sağlayacağı düşünülmektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Ebelik, yüksek lisans, doktora, lisansüstü tezler

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Received: 16.11.2018 **Accepted:** 13.12.2018 **Doi:** 10.32322/jhsm.484290

This study was presented as a verbal presentation in the 1st International, 2nd National Istanbul Midwifery Days Congress, which was held between 26-28 April 2018.

Cite this article as: Göncü Serhatlıoğlu S, Dolgun G. The overview of postgraduate thesis within the department of midwifery site (2004-2017) in Turkey. J Health Sci Med 2019; 2(2): 44-48.

INTRODUCTION

Midwifery, one of the first professional health discipline in the history is defined as the combination of science and art based on scientific and ethical values with the parallel developments in the field of medicine (1). Scientific knowledge accumulation is important for the professionalization in the disciplines. Scientific advancement is possible through the continuous interactions of theoretical knowledge and midwifery practices. In order to develop and strengthen the midwifery profession, it is necessary to update the scientific knowledge and skills of midwifery with the results of their research and should provide health services in line with the evidence (2,3).

Emerging scientific and technological developments in the century we live in, brings a necessity for midwives to make scientific studies. Midwifery profession has undergone an important transformation in recent years in Turkey. The scientific education in the midwifery profession started with the transition from the traditional to the undergraduate teaching; and rapidly increased with graduate programs. The number of scientific studies carried out by the midwife students admitted to these programs have increased and the importance of conducting scientific research has been understood (4).

Postgraduate training programs focus on scientific research that enhances professional knowledge and skills (5). These programs provide a great contribution to the development of scientific knowledge in the profession of Midwifery (6). As in 2017, there are 10 master and 10 doctorate programs in the field of midwifery in Turkey by the Higher Education Council (YÖK). Midwifery education in universities are affiliated to health sciences institutes. The undergraduate, master and doctorate degree education started in 1996, 2003, and 2013, respectively (7).

Since the graduate education in Midwifery is not provided by all the universities, it negatively affects the number of applicants, and delaying the development of updated scientific literature on midwifery. Graduate midwives attended to post-graduate education in obstetrics and gynecology, child health, public health and management nursing fields or public health in medical faculty since midwifery graduate programs are limited. The thesis, submitted in the professions different than midwifery, may not be able to easily find in the YÖK's national thesis center under the keyword of "midwifery".

In the literature, studies evaluating thesis or researches belonging to other professions have been determined (8-12). Öncel and Sümen (11) conducted postgraduate research in Turkey in the field of public health nursing thesis studied 427. In their re-

sult, the majority of the thesis were master, and they were descriptive in the study. Bağcıvan et al. (10) examined the nursing researches carried out in the field of oncology and published between the years of 2009-2013, 66% of the researches were found to be descriptive and 65% were found to be made by academic nurses.

In the updated survey of midwifery literature, we have not a qualitative study that makes a detailed evaluation of graduate theses in the field of midwifery it is important to express numerically the current status of the graduate thesis. By studying postgraduate in midwifery, it is possible to determine necessary areas which require scientific study, to gain different perspectives about midwifery and to form future plans and programs. For this reason, it is crucial to examine and evaluate submitted in midwifery department.

The aim of this research is to examine the postgraduate theses in Midwifery between the years of 2004-2017. It is aimed to reveal a general view of theses submitted in the field of midwifery and to contribute information to the following studies.

MATERIAL AND METHOD

The research population between 2004 to 2017 constitutes thesis prepared at the department of midwifery. The samples of the study were determined by sampling from the criterion sampling method. The criteria in this study are that all the thesis must be submitted in between 2004-2017 to midwifery department in the database of YÖK. Within the scope of the research, 156 theses were examined. For this research, document analysis method (qualitative method) was used. The sub-objectives to be reached in this research are as follows:

- How is the distribution of theses according to their levels?
- How are the theses distributed according to universities?
- How is the distribution of the theses according to years?
- Which kind of research patterns were used in theses?
- How are the topics of thesis distributed?
- What samples were used in theses?
- How is the distribution of theses according to data collection places?

In this study, the National Thesis Monitoring Center section of YÖK's official webpage was used. Midwifery department selected from the search bar and related theses were downloaded.

To examine these theses, a form prepared by taking into account the sub-aims of the research and the related literature (8-12). In this form, information about the level of theses, distributions according to universities, year of thesis, pattern of study, subject of the thesis, sample group of the thesis, and the place of the research data are available. The data obtained from these theses were examined in accordance with the purpose and sub-objectives of the research by document analysis method. Numbers and percentages (%) were used in the data analysis of the theses in the research are shown on the following tables and graphs.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The interpretation of the findings and outcomes in the direction of the research purpose was carried out with the data collection form.

Thesis Level

All scanned theses (n: 156) in the database are master theses. Despite the fact that 3 (three) doctorate theses are completed in 2017, these theses are excluded from the scope of research since thesis data were not available in the database of YÖK at the time of research.

Distributions of Theses by Universities

When the distributions of the theses according to the universities are examined, it is seen in Fig. 1 that most of these theses are prepared in Ege University (19% - n: 29). Hence Ege University being the first university to offer a graduate program has an effectively high number of theses produced. From out of 13 universities, the number of state and private universities are 11 and 2, respectively (Figure 1).

Distribution of Theses by Years

When a number of these theses are analyzed according to the years, a positive trend of increasing tendency is observed (Figure. 2). Although two theses were published in 2004, it seems that in 2005 and 2006 no theses were submitted. It is thought that some of the universities which offer graduate program may have paused accepting students due to the change in the regulations of the graduate program offering criteria. In recent years there has been a significant increase in the number of theses. Most populated number of thesis, 29 is in the year of 2016. This increase can be explained by the increasing number of graduate students with newly offered graduate programs.

Distribution of Theses by Topics

The topics of theses are mostly perception, knowledge, attitude, behavior, problem, ethics, malpractice and mobbing (21.2%). The other most studied area was determined as prenatal period and postpartum period. Obstetric conditions and alternative treatment methods are the least studied thesis topics (Table 1).

Table 1. Distribution of theses by topics (N: 156)

Thesis topics	n	%
Perception / attitudes / behavior / knowledge / problem ethics / malpractice / mobbing / satisfaction	33	21.2
Prenatal	32	20.5
Postpartum	27	17.3
Mental health	20	1,8
Intrapartum	14	9.0
Scale adaptation / Scale development	8	5.1
Reproductive health / Sexual health	6	3.8
Newborn	5	3.2
Education / Counseling	5	3.2
Family planning	3	1.9
Alternative treatment methods	2	1.3
Obstetric conditions	1	0.6
Total	156	100

In a study in Western Australia by midwives, it was seen that the most studied subject was related to the postnatal experience (13). In another study which examined the researches carried out in the field of clinical nursing and midwifery in African countries, it is seen that the most studied topics are prenatal period, maternal health and prevention of mother / infant deaths (14). The reason why this is the most selected thesis topic in Turkey is that the objective data results are more valuable and statistical calculations and interpretations are easy to perform. It is also seen that prenatal and postpartum period topics are among the most studied subjects similar to studies in the universities abroad.

Pattern of Theses

Quantitative research methods (99.4%) the most used method in these theses. Although midwifery is one of the earliest professions, its scientific knowledge is not yet enough. For this reason, it is known that quantitative surveys are effective for faster case detection and knowledge accumulation (15). It is seen that the qualitative research methods, which is increasing in popularity in the field of health, were not used. The mixed method which provides information in-depth was used only once in these theses. The limited use of qualitative and mixed research

methods can be explained by the fact that the field is still in the process of establishing the quantitative information needed for knowledge base.

It is seen that, among qualitative research designs; non-experimental research designs (71.8%) are mostly used. Experimental research designs are 21.8%. The percentage of methodological method of scale adaptation and development studies included in other research studies was 5.8% (Table 2).

Tablo 2. Quantitative research pattern of theses (N: 156)

Non-experimental Research Designs	n	%
Descriptive	71	45.5
Cross-sectional designs	28	17.9
Comparative descriptor	7	4.5
Retrospective designs	4	2.6
Prospective designs	2	1.3
Experimental Research Designs	n	%
Semi-experimental	21	13.5
Full experimental	13	8.3
Other Research Designs	n	%
Methodological	9	5.8
Mixed method (qualitative + quantitative)	1	0.6
Total	156	100

These results are in parallel with the studies made in the field of nursing (11). It may also be considered that students and advisors have chosen research designs to be finished in the a short time period due to master's thesis time duration (approx. 1-2 years).

Distribution of Theses by Sample Groups

The most widely used sample groups are pregnant (34.6%) and puerperants (23.7%) in these theses. It is an expected result since these sample groups have great importance in the area of midwifery. Women (12.8%) constitute another important sample group for following researches. The least percentage of sample groups belong to midwifery students, midwifery academics, children, male/female patients and fathers.

In general assessment of these samples, it appears that almost every group which is directly related to the field of midwifery is involved in the research. The number of researches in the group of newborn and child health, which are very important fields of study for midwives is low due to the difficulty in receiving ethics committee approval. It can also be concluded that researchers are working with a sample group that can get easy access and receive ethical approval.

Distribution of Theses by Data Collection Places

It is seen that data were mostly collected from private/state hospitals (Figure 3). After hospitals, the most preferred institutions are family and community health centers. This place preferences shows a similarity to other theses by other health professions (11).

It is noteworthy that this study is limited with the graduate theses which are open access in YÖK's webpage, in the Department of Midwifery between the years of 2004-2017.

In summary, the scientific contribution of a graduate thesis to the real value of a profession is indisputably valuable (5). For this reason, during the preparation of postgraduate theses great attention should be paid in order to be genuine and comply with scientific principles.

CONCLUSION

A total of 156 postgraduate studies have been analyzed as a result of the research. All postgraduate theses are master theses. No doctorate thesis uploaded to the data entry section of YÖK. It has been determined that most of the master theses are completed in Ege, Cumhuriyet, Istanbul and Adnan Menderes University. The research topics of these theses were the descriptive studies that mostly perceives attitudes, behaviors and problems. Obstetric conditions and alternative treatment methods are among the least studied topics. Descriptive studies from quantitative research methods have been the most preferred research design. The most studied sample groups were pregnant and puerperal. The hospitals were the most preferred places for data collection. Looking at the distributions of the theses by years, the number of thesis has reached a peak point in 2016. Although the number of thesis has an irregular distribution over the years yet it shows an increasing behavior in the positive direction. It is considered that this behavior will have positive influence on the quality of health care.

Advices;

According to the results of the research, the following suggestions can be made:

- Cumulative use of qualitative and quantitative research designs to obtain information in-depth in the field of midwifery,
- Increasing the scientific level also improves the quality of health care in parallel. Increase the use of systematic review, experimental/randomize patterns in field of midwifery to improve the scientific background.

- The real value and importance of postgraduate theses, which have an important place in increasing the scientific knowledge of the profession, should be taught to undergraduate students and field employees

FINANCIAL SUPPORT AND CONFLICT OF INTEREST

There is no person / organization that financially supports the study. No conflict of interest is declared by the authors.

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