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Reflecting on 2023

As 2023 comes to a close, I find myself looking back over the past year, and considering the wide range of research studies, professional articles and clinical pieces that the *British Journal of Midwifery* has published. I am, as ever, incredibly grateful to be able to contribute to a field that has such important implications for women and families across the UK and beyond.

I am especially proud of our submissions from student and postgraduate midwives, who have published their literature reviews and other work undertaken as part of their qualifications. Moving into 2024, I am sure that we will see many more excellent submissions, and in particular, contributions to our new 'Sapientia' section (McEwan and Editorial Board, 2023), which will highlight the incredible work being done by students, educators and all those working in midwifery higher education.

Some of our articles this year have explored midwifery care and minority groups, such as those who are trans and non-binary. The topic of inequalities in care for minority groups seems particularly important in light of the MBRRACE-UK (2023) report, which highlighted continued disparities in care, as I discussed last month (Allkins, 2023).

Naomi Delap, director of the charity Birth Companions (2023), commented that the trends shown by the report were 'truly shocking', adding that 'we cannot turn the tide on these terrible statistics...by simply repeating the same recommendations again and again'. The report brings home the unfortunate reality for many women in the UK, and emphasises not only how important maternity care is, but how much work is needed to turn the tide against staff shortages, systemic inequalities and an increasingly overworked and burnt out workforce.

The *BJM* has published a range of Charity Spotlight articles throughout 2023, focusing



Suzannah Allkins
Editor

on providing support for women and families who experience difficulties such as baby loss, substance addiction and mental health issues. Looking over these articles, and the work that is being done by charities across the UK, it is clear to me that midwives and other maternity healthcare professionals undertake important work that is vital not just during pregnancy and birth, but to an incredible range of experiences for women and birthing people.

As I look forward to the new year, I hope that our readers will feel inspired and encouraged to explore some of these topics in their own work, and look forward to what I am sure will be an excellent array of submissions for 2024. **BJM**

Allkins S. Reports highlight inequalities in care.

Br J Midwifery. 2023;31(11):605. <https://doi.org/10.12968/bjom.2023.31.11.605>

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