



Midwifery Philosophy in Islam and its Implications for Midwifery Practice: A Scoping Review

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Abstract

Modern midwifery practice is increasingly shaped by medical technology and evidence-based approaches, which may at times create ethical and cultural tensions when applied in Muslim contexts. Islamic midwifery philosophy offers a value-based framework that integrates spiritual, moral, and ethical principles with clinical care. This study aimed to explore how the philosophy of midwifery in Islam provides guidance and solutions to challenges encountered in contemporary midwifery practice. A scoping review design was employed following the PRISMA-ScR guidelines. Literature searches were conducted across multiple electronic databases, including PubMed, Google Scholar, Scopus, JSTOR, ScienceDirect, and university libraries. Studies published between 2019 and 2025 that addressed Islamic values, ethics, or philosophy in relation to modern midwifery practice were included. Of 1,013 records identified, six studies met the final inclusion criteria and were analyzed thematically. The findings indicate that Islamic midwifery philosophy supports woman-centered, culturally sensitive, and holistic care, emphasizing respect for dignity, informed decision-making, ethical use of medical technology, and attention to emotional and spiritual well-being. Islamic values were found to enhance communication, trust, and patient engagement without opposing evidence-based practice. This review concludes that Islamic midwifery philosophy complements modern midwifery by providing ethical and practical guidance that strengthens culturally responsive, safe, and patient-centered maternity care in contemporary healthcare settings.

Introduction

Modern midwifery practices, which are largely dominated by medical technology and scientific approaches, are sometimes not always in line with Islamic moral and ethical values (Abdulghani & Alrumayh, 2025; Peters et al., 2025; Danusiri et al., 2025). For example, in procedures involving cutting or the use of technology that may conflict with religious principles (Suryani et al., 2023; Kumar, 2025; Mustapha & Malkan, 2025). The philosophy of midwifery in Islam refers to the guiding principles, ethical standards, and approaches grounded in Islamic teachings, particularly as they relate to the practice of midwifery (Susilo et al., 2025; Kahnoie et al., 2025; Ismail et al., 2024).

In Islam, midwifery is not merely a profession concerned with physical well-being, but one that integrates moral, spiritual, and ethical considerations (Marmi & Riyadi, 2025; Hoosen et al., 2025). The philosophy emphasizes an understanding of life's essence, the roles of mothers and babies, and the fundamental rights and duties of healthcare providers toward pregnant

women, childbirth, and newborns. Islam provides a framework for reproductive health that encompasses physical, emotional, and spiritual dimensions, each of which is regarded as integral to the holistic care of both mothers and babies (Azalan & Ghani, 2024; Qibtiyah et al., 2025; Machmudah et al., 2024).

Contemporary midwifery practice has undergone significant transformation due to advances in medical technology, standardized clinical protocols, and the widespread adoption of evidence-based care (Barbieri et al., 2025; Guo et al., 2025; Alshammari et al., 2025). These developments have contributed to improved maternal and neonatal outcomes; however, they have also introduced ethical, cultural, and relational challenges, particularly in contexts where healthcare practices intersect with strong religious and cultural values. For Muslim women, pregnancy and childbirth are not solely biomedical events but deeply meaningful experiences shaped by Islamic beliefs, ethical principles, and spiritual practices (Mujur et al., 2025; Rayna et al., 2025; Almarri et al., 2025).

Islamic perspectives on health emphasize holistic care that integrates physical, emotional, spiritual, and ethical dimensions (Isdianto et al., 2025; Laksana & Hisham, 2025; v & Ushama, 2025). Within this framework, midwifery is understood not merely as a technical profession but as a moral and relational practice grounded in compassion, respect for human dignity, and responsibility toward both mother and child. Islamic teachings highlight the importance of safeguarding maternal and fetal well-being, supporting informed decision-making, and maintaining ethical conduct in healthcare interactions. These principles closely align with contemporary midwifery values, such as woman-centered care, respect for autonomy, and ethical clinical practice (Naughton et al., 2025; Crepinsek et al., 2023)

Despite this conceptual alignment, tensions may arise in modern maternity care when technological interventions, standardized procedures, or institutional constraints do not fully accommodate patients' religious values, cultural expectations, or spiritual needs (Dsane-Nsor et al., 2025; Opara et al., 2024; Zakeresfahani et al., 2022). Previous qualitative studies have shown that Muslim women's engagement with maternity services is influenced by beliefs related to modesty, spiritual support, pain management, and trust in healthcare providers. At the same time, midwives and other maternity healthcare professionals report challenges in delivering culturally and religiously sensitive care within technologically driven and time-pressured healthcare systems (Salzmann et al., 2025; Kaur et al., 2025).

Although research examining Muslim women's maternity experiences and culturally sensitive care has increased in recent years, the literature addressing Islamic midwifery philosophy remains fragmented and dispersed across disciplines. Existing studies tend to focus on specific experiences or practices, with limited synthesis of how Islamic philosophical and ethical principles can inform and guide modern midwifery practice as a whole. To date, there has been no comprehensive scoping review that systematically maps empirical evidence on the role of Islamic midwifery philosophy in addressing contemporary midwifery challenges (Asmadi et al., 2025; Shhadat et al., 2025).

Given the emerging and heterogeneous nature of this body of literature, a scoping review approach is appropriate to identify key concepts, themes, and gaps in current research. Therefore, this study aims to explore how the philosophy of midwifery in Islam provides guidance and solutions to challenges faced by midwifery practitioners in modern healthcare settings. By synthesizing qualitative evidence from diverse contexts, this review seeks to clarify how Islamic values can complement evidence-based practice and support ethical, culturally responsive, and woman-centered midwifery care within contemporary maternity services.

Methods

Research Design

This study employed a scoping review research design to comprehensively map and explore existing literature related to the philosophy of midwifery in Islam and its implications for modern midwifery practice. The scoping review approach was chosen because the available references on this topic are limited and heterogeneous, originating from diverse study designs and publication types (Munn et al., 2018). The review process followed the PRISMA-ScR (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses Extension for Scoping Reviews) guidelines to ensure methodological transparency and rigor (Tricco et al., 2018). The scoping review was conducted through five stages proposed by Arksey and O'Malley: (1) identifying the research question, (2) identifying relevant studies, (3) selecting eligible studies, (4) charting the data, and (5) collating, summarizing, and reporting the results (Westphal et al., 2021). The research question was formulated using the PEOS framework, resulting in the following guiding question: "How can the philosophy of midwifery in Islam provide guidance and solutions to the challenges faced by midwifery practitioners in dealing with modern midwifery developments?"

Data Sources and Search Strategy

A systematic literature search was conducted across multiple electronic databases to identify relevant studies on Islamic midwifery philosophy and its application in contemporary practice. The databases selected included PubMed, Google Scholar, Scopus, JSTOR, ScienceDirect, and University Libraries, chosen to ensure comprehensive coverage of health, social science, and interdisciplinary literature. All searches were performed on January 21, 2025. The initial search yielded a total of 1,013 articles, consisting of 1,005 articles from PubMed, 6 from Google Scholar, and 2 from university library databases. All retrieved articles were imported into Rayyan reference management software to facilitate screening and duplicate removal. Six duplicate articles were identified and excluded. Subsequently, title and abstract screening was conducted, resulting in 40 potentially relevant articles. After full-text review, 6 articles met the inclusion criteria and were included in the final scoping review.

Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

The inclusion and exclusion criteria were developed to ensure that the selected studies were conceptually aligned with the objectives of this scoping review and reflected the actual characteristics of the included evidence. Studies were included if they were published between 2019 and 2025, corresponding to the last 6 years, to ensure relevance to contemporary midwifery practice. Eligible articles were peer-reviewed qualitative empirical studies or qualitative synthesis studies, including qualitative systematic reviews, meta-ethnography, and evidence-based practice papers that explicitly addressed Islamic values, beliefs, spirituality, ethics, or philosophical perspectives in relation to midwifery or maternity care. The population and context of included studies comprised Muslim women receiving maternity care and/or healthcare professionals, such as midwives or maternity staff, involved in maternal care within Islamic or Muslim contexts and modern healthcare systems. Studies were required to explore culturally and spiritually sensitive care, ethical guidance, woman-centered care models, or the integration of Islamic values with modern midwifery practice. Eligible outcomes included insights into ethical decision-making, culturally competent practice, communication, trust, and practical solutions to challenges encountered in contemporary midwifery. Only studies published in English with full-text availability were included. Studies were excluded if they consisted of editorials, opinion pieces, commentaries, news articles, book reviews, or conference abstracts without full papers. Articles focusing on non-maternal health fields, non-healthcare settings, or religious discussions unrelated to midwifery practice were also excluded. In addition, studies that addressed maternity care from a purely biomedical or technical perspective without consideration of Islamic ethical, cultural, or spiritual dimensions were not included. Publications in languages other than English, studies published before 2019, and articles without accessible full texts were excluded from the review. The consistent application

of these inclusion and exclusion criteria ensured that the final body of evidence accurately reflected the scope of this review and supported a focused synthesis of how Islamic midwifery philosophy informs and complements modern midwifery practice.

Table 1. Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria for Studies on the Philosophy of Midwifery in Islam

Criterion	Inclusion	Exclusion
Article type	Empirical qualitative studies, qualitative systematic reviews, meta-ethnography, and evidence-based practice papers addressing Islamic values or ethics in midwifery	Editorials, opinion pieces, commentaries, news articles, book reviews, conference abstracts without full papers
Population / Context	Muslim women receiving maternity care and/or healthcare professionals (midwives, maternity staff) involved in maternal care within Islamic or Muslim contexts	Studies focusing on non-maternal health fields, non-healthcare settings, or religious discussions unrelated to midwifery
Focus / Main Variable	Islamic values, beliefs, spirituality, ethics, or philosophy influencing midwifery practice and maternal care in modern healthcare systems	Studies not addressing Islamic philosophy, ethics, spirituality, or values in relation to midwifery
Intervention / Approach	Culturally and spiritually sensitive care, ethical guidance, woman-centered care models, or integration of Islamic values with modern midwifery practice	Purely technical, biomedical, or clinical studies with no ethical, cultural, or value-based discussion
Outcomes / Contribution	Insights into ethical guidance, culturally competent practice, decision-making support, improved communication, trust, and solutions to modern midwifery challenges	Studies without clear implications for midwifery practice, ethical reflection, or professional guidance
Data source	Qualitative interviews, focus groups, longitudinal interviews, phenomenological data, qualitative systematic reviews, or meta-ethnographic synthesis	Data sources unrelated to maternal health, midwifery practice, or Islamic ethical and cultural frameworks
Language	English	Languages other than English
Publication year	2019–2025 (last 6 years)	Published before 2019
Accessibility	Full-text articles available	Abstract-only publications or inaccessible full texts

These inclusion and exclusion criteria were designed to ensure that the selected studies were directly relevant to the purpose of the scoping review, which is to explore the philosophy of midwifery in Islam and its application to modern midwifery practice. The primary focus is not solely on Islamic normative principles, but on how these values and ethics translate into practical guidance for addressing contemporary challenges, such as the use of medical technology, clinical decision-making, and holistic care approaches. Therefore, only studies that provide conceptual, ethical, and practical contributions to modern midwifery were included in this review.

Article Selection and Screening Process

The article selection and screening process was conducted systematically following the PRISMA-ScR guidelines to ensure transparency, rigor, and reproducibility. An initial literature search across selected electronic databases yielded a total of 1,013 records. All identified articles were imported into the Rayyan reference management software to facilitate screening and duplicate removal. During this stage, six duplicate records were identified and excluded, resulting in 1,007 unique articles for further screening. The first screening phase involved reviewing titles and abstracts to assess relevance to the research question: How can the philosophy of midwifery in Islam provide guidance and solutions to the challenges faced by midwifery practitioners in dealing with modern midwifery developments? At this stage, articles were excluded if they did not address midwifery or maternity care, did not involve Muslim populations or Islamic values, or were unrelated to contemporary healthcare practice. As a result, 967 articles were excluded, leaving 40 articles deemed potentially relevant.

The second screening phase involved a full-text review of the remaining 40 articles. During this phase, studies were assessed against the predefined inclusion and exclusion criteria, including publication within the last 6 years, relevance to Islamic perspectives in midwifery or maternity care, focus on empirical or qualitative research, and availability of full-text articles in English. Articles were excluded if they were review-only papers without empirical findings, conceptual articles without relevance to midwifery practice, or publications that did not explicitly address challenges or implications for modern maternity care. Following the full-text assessment, 34 articles were excluded due to insufficient relevance to the research focus, lack of alignment with Islamic or culturally informed midwifery perspectives, or methodological limitations. Ultimately, six studies met all inclusion criteria and were included in the final scoping review. This reflects the narrow and emerging nature of Islamic midwifery philosophy as an empirical research field. This structured selection and screening process ensured that the included studies were methodologically appropriate, thematically relevant, and directly addressed the role of Islamic values and philosophy in guiding modern midwifery practice. The final body of evidence provides a focused yet comprehensive foundation for analyzing how Islamic midwifery philosophy contributes practical and ethical solutions to contemporary challenges in maternity care.

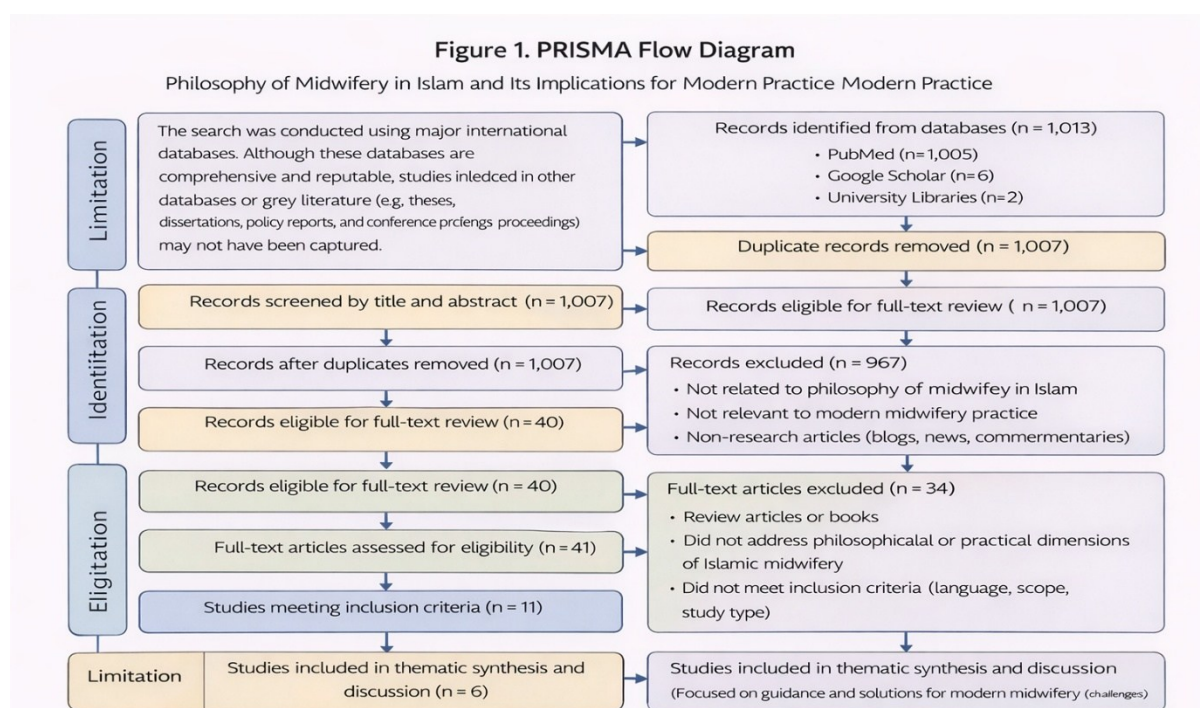


Figure 1. PRISMA Flow Diagram

The PRISMA flow diagram illustrates a structured and transparent process of article identification, screening, eligibility assessment, and inclusion. This process reflects a systematic effort to ensure that the studies included in this review are both methodologically sound and thematically aligned with the research focus. Through multiple stages of refinement, the selection strategy prioritized relevance to the philosophy of midwifery in Islam and its application within contemporary midwifery practice, while minimizing the inclusion of studies that lacked conceptual, ethical, or practical significance. The final body of included studies represents a focused yet diverse set of qualitative and synthesis-based research that captures both service-user perspectives and professional experiences. This selection approach allows for a nuanced understanding of how Islamic philosophical and ethical values intersect with modern midwifery challenges, such as technological advancement, cultural diversity, patient-centered care, and ethical decision-making. By narrowing the evidence base to studies that explicitly address these intersections, the review ensures coherence between the research question and the selected literature. The screening and selection process strengthens the credibility of the review findings by ensuring that the included studies collectively contribute to mapping the role of Islamic midwifery philosophy as a guiding framework in modern healthcare contexts. This approach supports a meaningful synthesis of evidence and provides a solid foundation for discussing how value-based perspectives can complement clinical and technological developments in contemporary midwifery practice.

Result and Discussion

Characteristics of Included Studies

The six studies included in this review were published between 2019 and 2025, so all met the inclusion criteria of publications within the past 6 years. All studies used a qualitative or synthetic qualitative approach, which is appropriate for exploring the experiences, values, and challenges faced in modern midwifery practice in the context of Muslim populations. This approach allows for a deeper understanding of how values and cultural factors interact with contemporary maternity health services. Most studies collected data through in-depth interviews and focus group discussions, both with Muslim women receiving maternity services and with health workers, including midwives, directly involved in midwifery care. Additionally, two studies used qualitative systematic observation and meta-ethnography to synthesize findings from various previous studies. These diverse data sources provide a comprehensive picture of service user experiences and professional perspectives on the dynamics of modern midwifery practice.

In terms of population, four studies focused on the experiences of Muslim women during pregnancy, childbirth, and the postpartum period, while two studies highlighted the experiences and challenges of health workers in providing maternity care that aligns with patients' values and needs. Geographically, most studies were conducted in high-altitude countries, particularly the United Kingdom, with one study from Turkey. This reflects the context of modern healthcare with established midwifery systems and widespread use of medical technology. The main variables examined included the influence of cultural and religious values on healthcare decision-making, Muslim women's experiences in accessing and utilizing modern midwifery services, and the professional challenges midwives face in providing culturally sensitive care. Several studies also highlighted the role of spirituality and emotional support in improving maternal well-being during pregnancy and childbirth.

This focus demonstrates that midwifery practice is influenced not only by clinical aspects but also by psychosocial factors and the patient's inherent values. The research findings indicate that understanding patient values and beliefs contributes to improving the quality of midwifery care, particularly in terms of communication, trust, and acceptance of modern medical interventions. These studies confirm that integrating culturally and spiritually sensitive

approaches into midwifery practice helps midwives address the challenges of modern practice, such as the use of technology, rigorous clinical standards, and diverse patient backgrounds, thus supporting safer, more ethical, and patient-centered care.

Table 2. Summary of Reviewed Studies on the Philosophy of Midwifery in Islam and Its Implications for Modern Practice

No	Research Title (Author, Year)	Year	Sample / Data Source	Intervention / Main Variable	Key Results
1	Muslim women's experiences of maternity services in the UK: qualitative systematic review and thematic synthesis (Firdous et al., 2020)	2020	6 qualitative studies of Muslim women using maternity services in UK	Cultural and religious influences on maternity care engagement	Islamic values shape decision-making (e.g., antenatal care, medication), highlighting need for culturally competent midwifery practice.
2	Religious practices of Muslim women in the UK during maternity: evidence-based professional practice recommendations (Hassan, 2022)	2022	8 interviews, 5 focus groups, 12 HCP interviews	Religious practices during maternity and professional support needs	Provides practice recommendations for healthcare professionals to meet Muslim women's religious needs during maternity care.
3	A qualitative study of healthcare professionals' experiences of providing maternity care for Muslim women in the UK (Hassan et al., 2020)	2020	Qualitative interviews with 12 HCPs in maternity unit	HCP perspectives on culturally compatible maternity care	HCPs report challenges and need for training to meet Muslim women's cultural/religious needs.
4	The Impact of Culture on Access to and Utilisation of Maternity Care Amongst Muslim Women in High-Income Countries: A Qualitative Systematic Review (Al-Mubarak et al., 2025)	2023	Meta-ethnographic synthesis of 24 studies	Cultural and religious impact on maternity care access/utilisation	Cultural/religious factors influence communication, trust, and engagement with modern maternity services.
5	Exploring English speaking	2019	Longitudinal interviews with	Personal experiences of	Islamic beliefs central to women's

	Muslim women's first-time maternity experiences: a qualitative longitudinal interview study (Hassan et al., 2019)		Muslim women in UK	maternity influenced by religion	engagement with maternity services and clinical choices.
6	Pregnant Turkish Muslim Women's Perspectives and Experiences on Religion and Spirituality during Pregnancy (Yilmaz & Uzunçakmak 2025)	2025	16 pregnant Muslim women (phenomenological)	Spirituality and pregnancy experiences	Highlights importance of faith/spiritual support in pregnancy, informing culturally responsive midwifery practices.

All the articles in the table share a key similarity in that they position Muslim religious values, beliefs, and practices as important factors influencing maternity experiences and modern midwifery practice. All six studies used a qualitative or qualitative synthesis approach, focusing on the experiences of Muslim women and/or healthcare professionals in the context of modern, technology-based maternity services. All articles affirm that Islamic values influence clinical decision-making, communication patterns, acceptance of medical interventions, and the relationship between midwives and patients. Furthermore, all studies highlight the challenges that arise when the modern midwifery system is not fully responsive to the values, culture, and beliefs of Muslim patients, necessitating a more sensitive, ethical, and patient-centered approach to practice.

Among the six articles, “Religious practices of Muslim women in the UK during maternity: Evidence-based professional practice recommendations” (Hassan, 2022) stands out in addressing the research question. This article not only explicitly identifies the challenges faced in modern midwifery practice but also offers evidence-based recommendations for healthcare professionals, including midwives, to integrate patients’ religious needs into their daily clinical practice. Thus, this article most clearly demonstrates how Islamic values and philosophy can be translated into practical solutions in the context of modern midwifery, particularly in addressing issues such as communication, emotional support, and clinical decision-making in a complex and technologically advanced healthcare environment.

Collectively, the six articles demonstrate that Islamic midwifery philosophy provides guidance and solutions to the challenges of modern midwifery practice through an emphasis on woman-centered care, respect for the patient's values and beliefs, and strengthening the therapeutic relationship between the midwife and the mother. This philosophy does not contradict the development of modern midwifery but rather complements it with a value framework that helps midwives navigate challenges such as cultural diversity, the use of medical technology, and the complexity of clinical decision-making. By understanding and incorporating Islamic values into midwifery practice, midwives can improve the quality of communication, patient trust, adherence to care, and maternal satisfaction and safety. Therefore, Islamic midwifery philosophy serves as a relevant ethical and practical approach to support midwives in navigating the dynamics and demands of modern midwifery.

The Role of Islamic Midwifery Philosophy in Addressing Contemporary Midwifery Challenges

The findings of this review indicate that Islamic midwifery philosophy plays a significant role in helping midwives navigate the challenges of contemporary midwifery practice, particularly within modern, technologically advanced healthcare systems. Across the six included studies, Islamic values emerge not as barriers to modern care, but as complementary principles that enhance the quality, safety, and acceptability of maternity services. This philosophy provides a value-based framework that supports midwives in addressing complex clinical, ethical, and interpersonal challenges encountered in diverse patient populations. One of the key challenges in modern midwifery practice is delivering care that is both clinically effective and culturally responsive. The reviewed studies consistently show that Muslim women's engagement with maternity services is strongly influenced by their values and beliefs, which shape decisions related to antenatal care attendance, consent to medical procedures, pain management, and postpartum practices. Islamic midwifery philosophy supports woman-centered care by emphasizing respect for personal values, dignity, and informed decision-making. By acknowledging these principles, midwives are better equipped to foster trust, improve communication, and enhance patient cooperation, which are essential components of safe and effective maternity care in modern clinical settings.

Another major challenge addressed by Islamic midwifery philosophy is the ethical use of medical technology. Contemporary midwifery increasingly relies on advanced technologies such as ultrasound monitoring, electronic fetal surveillance, and clinical interventions to manage risk and improve maternal-fetal outcomes. The studies reviewed demonstrate that Islamic perspectives generally support the use of such technologies when they contribute to maternal and fetal well-being. This alignment provides midwives with ethical reassurance when integrating technology into care, helping them balance evidence-based practice with sensitivity to patient concerns. As a result, technology is framed not as a source of conflict, but as a tool that can be ethically and confidently used within value-informed practice. The review also highlights challenges faced by midwives in managing communication barriers and professional uncertainty when caring for culturally diverse populations. Healthcare professionals in several studies reported difficulties in understanding patients' expectations, religious practices, and decision-making processes. Islamic midwifery philosophy offers practical guidance by encouraging empathy, active listening, and respect for patient autonomy. These principles strengthen the therapeutic relationship between midwives and women, reduce misunderstandings, and support shared decision-making, which is increasingly recognized as a standard of quality care in modern midwifery.

The studies underscore the importance of addressing psychosocial and emotional dimensions of maternal health, which are often intensified in high-pressure, technology-driven maternity environments. Islamic midwifery philosophy promotes holistic care by recognizing emotional and spiritual well-being as integral to maternal health. This perspective supports midwives in responding to stress, anxiety, and emotional vulnerability during pregnancy and childbirth, thereby improving overall care outcomes. Importantly, this holistic approach aligns with contemporary public health models that emphasize mental health, emotional support, and patient satisfaction as key indicators of quality maternity care. The evidence suggests that Islamic midwifery philosophy provides practical and ethical solutions to contemporary midwifery challenges by reinforcing patient-centered care, guiding ethical technology use, improving communication, and supporting holistic maternal well-being. Rather than opposing modern developments, this philosophy complements evidence-based practice by offering a value-oriented lens through which midwives can deliver safe, respectful, and culturally competent care. Consequently, Islamic midwifery philosophy serves as a relevant and adaptive

framework that enables midwives to meet the evolving demands of modern maternity care while maintaining professional integrity and patient trust.

Conclusion

This review demonstrates that Islamic midwifery philosophy offers meaningful ethical and practical guidance for addressing the challenges of contemporary midwifery practice within modern healthcare systems. The included studies consistently show that Islamic values support woman-centered, culturally responsive, and holistic care without conflicting with evidence-based practice or the use of medical technology. By emphasizing respect for patient dignity, informed decision-making, ethical use of technology, and attention to psychosocial and emotional well-being, Islamic midwifery philosophy helps midwives navigate clinical complexity, cultural diversity, and communication challenges. Overall, the findings indicate that this philosophical framework complements modern midwifery developments by strengthening trust, improving care quality, and supporting safe, ethical, and patient-centered maternity care in diverse and technologically advanced practice settings.

Suggestion

Modern midwifery practices must be carried out carefully to ensure that medical technology is accepted in accordance with the principles of Islamic law, such as respecting life, the safety of mothers and babies, and performing medical procedures with ethics and good intentions.

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