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**FOR JOANNA**

**WHO HAS CHANGED OUR LIVES FOREVER**

**MAY YOUR LIFE BE A CONTINUAL SEARCH FOR  
KNOWLEDGE AND WISDOM.**

**MAKING DECISIONS: FOCUSING ON MY BABY'S  
WELL-BEING**

A grounded theory study  
exploring the way that decisions were made  
in the  
midwife-woman relationship.

A thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements  
for the degree of Master of Philosophy in Midwifery at  
Massey University

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## **ABSTRACT**

This thesis presents a study using a Grounded Theory methodology to explore the way that decisions were made in the midwife-woman relationship. The purpose of this study was to explore the woman's experience of the way that decisions were made, to gain an understanding of it and finally to present a description of the way such decisions were made when women utilised midwife-only care within the New Zealand maternity setting.

Ten women were invited to participate. A diverse sample of women with different birth experiences and from different cultures was obtained. The sample was obtained using the tool of theoretical sampling which highlighted, through data analysis, the need for participants with different characteristics. All women who were interviewed were asked to describe their pregnancy and birth experience, their relationship with their midwife and the way they believed decisions were made during their pregnancy and birth experience.

Data analysis was performed using the constant comparative method. Results showed that women acted in ways to ensure their baby's safety. Women initially acknowledged their pregnancy and as a result, they selected a maternity carer and participated in self education. To ensure their baby's well-being women undertook procedures and followed instructions from their midwife. Whilst they planned for their birth and made decisions that effected themselves and their unborn child, the primary goal behind these actions was their baby's health. The women trusted their midwives to endorse actions that would lead to a safe outcome. At times the women wanted midwives to make decisions for them. Choice, continuity and control are important to women but safety is vital.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

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