

By Sandra Abena Opoku and Afua Sarpong

As part of the north south project, it is necessary that the southern participants undertake an internship with a health facility to familiarize with the duties of midwives in Germany. The Charite Virchow Campus Klinikum was selected.

On the 5<sup>th</sup> of May, 2014, the south participants reported to the midwife manager (in-charge) of the pre-natal and labour wards. She was aware of the contract that existed and received us warmly, showed us around and introduced us to the various stations we were to work in.

Afua and I were asked by the manageress to prepare our time schedule which should either be 06:30 am to 15:00 and 14:30 to 23:00. We were to alternate between the prenatal ward and the labour ward respectively.

On duty we affiliate ourselves with midwives who speak English or at least to some extent can express themselves in the English language and stay with them as they can best explain to us how things are done.

#### Labour Ward Admissions

On the delivery wards, there are midwives who are responsible for admitting women who come in with labour, caesarean section and with other conditions. Here the clients are being taken care of before a doctor sees them later.

#### Immediate Care of the pregnant woman

Women and their families who come through the entrance are warmly received by ever smiling and friendly midwives who arrange a bed for them and start a CTG assessment, check their vital signs, routine examinations if necessary and prepare the necessary paperwork before they take them to the respective wards.

#### Labour Rooms

Patients who are in active labour are given intravenous line and are constantly monitored via CTG and the partogram until their delivery. Each labouring woman has a very comfortable room and everything they request, including family support.

#### Role of the midwife

During the active phase of labour and delivery, it is the responsibility of the midwife to ensure that everything is duly explained to the patient and family. There are surveillance monitors at every station including the kitchen where midwives can provide continuous monitoring of both maternal and fetal wellbeing.

#### Pain Management

As much as birth is a physiological process most women are unable to bear it and the midwives try as much as possible to help the women go through this successfully.

Some women request for epidural anaesthesia, others require mild pain relieve and others prefer conservative therapies such as walking around and hydrotherapy.

#### Delivery and care

The midwives are always there to attend to the labouring women together with their birth partners and after delivery they are allowed some time with the newly born baby to initiate bonding.

Some women preferred a 'Kaiser Geburt' (caesarean sections where the birth partners are allowed to cut the cords of the babies) which was a delight to watch.

#### Experiences

We the south participants would like to express our sincere gratitude to the all midwives of the Charité Virchow Campus Klinikum for their patience, time and the concern they showed. They believed in us and allowed us to perform tasks and saw us as part of their team. We have learnt how some gadgets are used to enhance the work of the midwife such as the tele-lift and the bomb that sends blood samples to the central laboratory for investigation.

We are very grateful to HITA for making this possible for us and and we hope to contribute our quota to make this project a success.