

Characteristics of first year undergraduate students in midwifery in Germany

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⁶ The KoHeb study is being conducted with the support of further midwifery programmes at the University of Augsburg, Martin Luther University Halle-Wittenberg, University of Luebeck, Johannes Gutenberg University Mainz, and University of Tuebingen in Germany.

Background

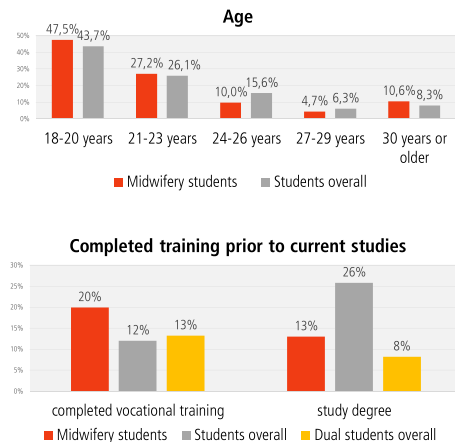
Midwifery undergraduate study programmes have been established at universities and universities of applied sciences throughout Germany from 2020 onwards. The programmes most often provide a 7 semestre study course encompassing 210 ECTS in a dual career structure: Students have a contract with a hospital, receive a salary, and are students as well. Due to the recent introduction, little is known about the characteristics of first-year midwifery students in Germany. This study aims to describe social and individual characteristics of midwifery students in their first year in comparison to other students studying in a dual career structure.

Methods

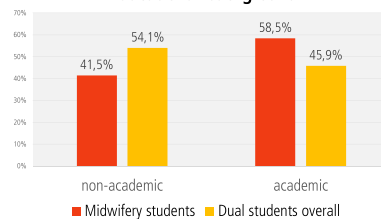
After receiving ethical approval, first-year students enrolled in midwifery programmes in Germany were invited to participate in the standardised online survey at the beginning of the 2024/25 winter semester. From the overall 48 universities and universities of applied sciences offering midwifery education in Germany, 326 students from 29 institutions participated in the survey. Descriptive analysis was carried out using SPSS 29. Results were compared with data for (dual career) students overall using data from the 22nd Social Survey across all degree programmes in Germany (Becker et al. 2021).

Results

Students social characteristics



Educational background

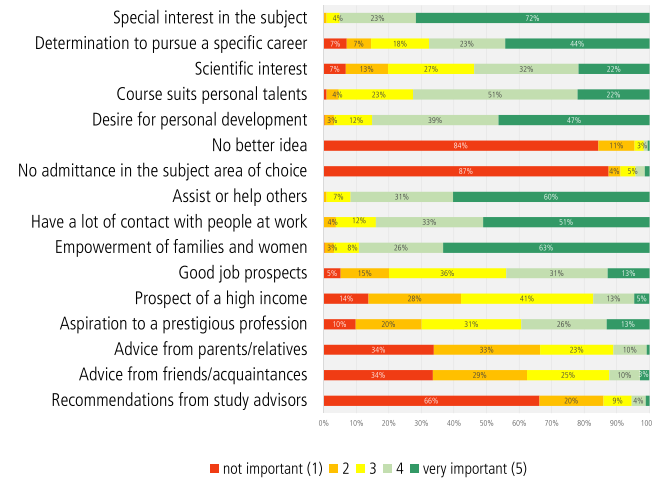


Notes. Non-academic = no relative has a university degree; Academic = at least one close relative has a university degree.

Notes. Data on "Students overall" is based on own calculations using data from the German Federal Statistical Office for the reporting period WS 2023/24 on first-year students in their first semester; excluding those under the age of 18.

Students individual characteristics

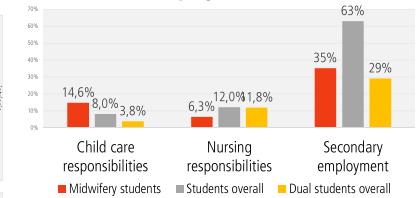
Why are students studying midwifery?



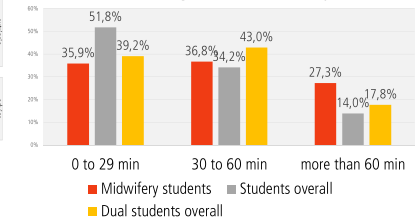
72 % of midwifery students state their "interest in the subject" as "very important" compared to **32,5 % of dual students** in the 22nd Social Survey.

Students personal circumstances

Accountabilities in addition to the study programme



Travelling time to university



Discussion

Our study provides first empirical insights and allows to compare midwifery students with overall students and in particular dual career students. Among midwifery students in Germany, the proportion of students with childcare responsibilities, secondary employment and long travelling is comparatively high compared to other dual career students. This result poses challenges in terms of balancing dual studies and private life. In addition, midwifery students, like (dual) students in general, have diverse backgrounds and experiences. At the same time, first-year midwifery students show a highly intrinsic motivation, which can be beneficial for their progress in their studies (see Soyka et al. (in press) for further results). These findings will help universities and maternal facilities to improve the transition to higher education and support students according to their needs.

References:

Becker, K.; Beuß, M.; Bornkessel, P.; Ehrhardt, M.; Gerdas, F.; Hinz, T.; Isleib, S.; Koopmann, J.; Kroher, M.; Lörz, M.; Marczuk, A.; Meyer, J.; Mühle, K.; Multus, F.; Naumann, H.; Oelker, S.; Richter, J.; Schirmer, H.; Schirmer, S.; & Zimmer, L. (2024). *The Student Survey in Germany (2021)*. Data package 2021. Version: 1.0.1. German Centre for Higher Education Research and Science Studies (DZHW). <https://doi.org/10.21249/DZHW-sid2021-1.0.1>

Soyka, C., Schaper, N., Bauer, N. H., Berger, J., Schlüter-Cruse, M., Striebig, S., Tegethoff, D., Gross, M. M. & the KoHeb-Study Team (in press). Wer beginnt ein Hebammenstudium in Deutschland? Untersuchung der sozialen, individuellen und organisationalen Heterogenität unter den Studienanfänger:innen. [Who Starts Studying to Become a Midwife in Germany?] *Duales Studium*, 7.