FROM LAY MIDWIFE TO CERTIFIED NURSE-MIDWIFE: TOWARDS PROFESSIONAL BIRTH ASSISTANCE IN 19TH. CENTURY CHILE

ABSTRACT
The author describes how the role of midwives in the 19th Century went through a process of professionalization in Chile. This was a time when traditional practitioners who assisted women in childbirth were still fully trusted by women and performed an effective role. It also provides the necessary evidence to understand that the peculiarity of this work in Chile can only be understood as a process of professionalization where traditional midwives and their empirical knowledge turned into scientifically-trained certified nurse-midwives.

Key words: empirical midwife, certified nurse-midwife, history, professionalization