AIMS For a better birth...

An open letter of thanks to Catharine Hart, Campaigns Team Volunteer and Physiology-Informed Maternity Services (PIMS) campaign lead.

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From Alex Smith and all your friends from AIMS

Dearest Catharine,

The hugest thank you for being the guest editor for this issue of the journal. I have loved working with you during these last three months and really enjoyed our regular chats on the phone. We got business matters sorted with great efficiency *and* put the birth world to rights in no uncertain terms! What a team!

Just as we were getting to know each other better, you told me that you will be leaving AIMS, for a while at least. Your youngest child is starting school and you are about to embark on the retraining course you need to attend in order to re-register as a midwife. I know how important the theme of physiology-informed maternity care is for you, both as a midwife, and as a mother. In fact, one of the many things that I learned from you is that mothers and their newly born babies should remain together, day and night, even and especially if one or other of them is unwell. Since you shared this thought about 'co-location or couplet-care' in your wonderful article about your daughter Eliza's birth, the idea is slowly gaining ground. One glorious day when this becomes a reality, the practice and your name will be forever linked in my mind.

I can only imagine how much harder midwifery practice will be since having been steeped in the principles of consensual care, physiology-informed care, and continuity of carer, during your time as an AIMS volunteer - but if anyone can navigate this, it is you. I am sure that in every 'challenging' situation you will be able to feel our calm, collective presence in the room with you - which may or may not be helpful! I also know for sure that any woman will be lucky to have you as their midwife. You are one of the most gentle and calm people I have met, you have a warm sense of humour and clearly love learning; all qualities that form the very essence of a good midwife.

When you are settled back into the rhythm of work again, I trust you will check back in with AIMS and perhaps even find time to write for the journal about your new insights and adventures. Your work as an AIMS volunteer has been truly valued and appreciated - thank you Catharine. I hope you know that you have friends here and that we wouldn't want to be apart from you for too long.

So with the warmest farewell for now and very best wishes for the future, please keep in touch and come back soon!

With love from Alex, and everyone at AIMS.

