Jane Sharp Encyclopedia Article

Jane Sharp

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Contents

Jane Sharp Encyclopedia Article.....1

Contents.....2

Jane Sharp.....3

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fl. 1650

English midwife who was the first to author a text for the instruction of other English midwives, entitled *The Midwives Book, or the Whole Art of Midwifery Discovered; Directing Child-bearing Women How to Behave Themselves* (London, 1671). The book consisted of six sections: anatomy, signs of pregnancy, sterility, the conduct of labor, diseases of pregnancy, and postpartum diseases. Sharp's book, which went through several editions, was an influential and practical manual that reflected the state of the art in midwifery, and also recognized restrictions on the contemporary education of women.