

Letter of interest for a position as executive board member of the International Marcé Society for Perinatal Mental Health

Sarah Kittel-Schneider

My interest in perinatal mental health began as I treated patients in the general outpatient clinic of the Department of Psychiatry, Psychotherapy and Psychosomatic Medicine at the University Hospital of Würzburg. After moving to the University Hospital Frankfurt in September 2014 and changing position to Lead Consultant, I established a specialised outpatient clinic for perinatal mental illness. In my experience there is a great demand for specialized knowledge in this area and I find it also really satisfying being able to help mothers and thereby also their children and the whole family. I also became involved in the local perinatal network in Frankfurt and joined the Marcé-Society. In 2017, I initiated two research studies; one investigating psychopharmacological medication levels in breast milk, and another one exploring the prevalence of paternal perinatal depression. The data from both studies are currently being analysed and prepared for publication.

Since July 2019 I have held the position as Vice Director and Assistant Professor in the Department of Psychiatry, Psychotherapy and Psychosomatic Medicine at the University Hospital of Würzburg. I am also the Head of Developmental Psychiatry. This role includes acting as Lead of the Mother-(Father)-Child Unit, which encompasses a specialised outpatient clinic, day clinic, and the possibility for inpatient treatment with the baby. I am currently working on enhancing and improving these treatment services, as well as obtaining funding for further research studies.

I have been on the board of the German Speaking section of the Marcé-Society since May 2019. Since joining the board, I have organised a benefit concert for the Marcé-Society in conjunction with the Frankfurt section of the Alliance Against Depression. In 2018 and 2019 I was involved in planning events in Frankfurt to raise awareness for parental mental health on World Mental Maternal Health Day, in collaboration with the local perinatal network. I am interested and motivated to become further involved in international activities for raising awareness and improving the situation of mothers and fathers with perinatal mental health problems. I believe that becoming a board member of the International Marcé Society for Perinatal Mental Health is a great opportunity for networking, enhancing public awareness of these topics, and finding international collaboration partners for future studies. I would gladly commit time, experience and knowledge for this task.

Lastly, my position as Professor of Neurodevelopmental Psychiatry enables me to collaborate with the Child and Adolescent Psychiatry Department, Pediatric and Gynecology Department, Psychology Department, and several institutions in the social care sector. I additionally already have well-established collaboration partners in Switzerland and Austria. I therefore believe that I am in a good position to be able to promote the importance of parental mental health in Germany and German-speaking countries by organizing events, bringing it to the public and also doing further preclinical and clinical research in this important area.