
Key Topics in Perinatal Mental Health

Mauro Percudani • Alessandra Bramante
Valeria Brenna • Carmine Pariante
Editors

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 Springer

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Mauro Percudani
Department of Mental Health and Addiction
Services
Niguarda Hospital
Milan, Italy

Alessandra Bramante
Policentro Donna Ambulatory
Italian Marcé Society
Milan, Italy

Valeria Brenna
Department of Mental Health and Addiction
Services
Niguarda Hospital, Italian Marcé Society
Milan, Italy

Carmine Pariante
Department of Psychological Medicine
Institute of Psychiatry, Psychology and
Neuroscience, King's College London
London, UK

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Preface

We are delighted to write this preface to *Key Topics in Perinatal Mental Health*, this multidisciplinary book on all things related to mothers' mental health edited together, friends and colleagues.

When we first discussed the idea of this book, we were immediately overwhelmed by the scale of representing the breadth and depth of themes in the broader perinatal mental health context: from clinical psychiatry to biology to cultural factors; from public health to pharmacovigilance to psychotherapy. We are so grateful to the many colleagues who have accepted our invitation to write a chapter for this book, allowing to represent such complexity.

Across more than 30 chapters, we read state-of-the-art discussions generated in societal and geographical contexts as varied as Italy, the United Kingdom, Spain and India.

We start with a diagnosis-based series of chapters that discuss all relevant mental disorders, from the management of established diagnoses in the context of the perinatal period (for example, depression, bipolar disorder and anxiety disorders) to perinatal-specific disorders and symptoms (for example, intrusive thoughts of infant-related harm, puerperal psychosis and mother–infant bonding disorders). We also have an important contribution on perinatal affective disorders in fathers, highlighting the importance on men's mental health in the perinatal period.

Having discussed the clinical disorders, we move into the sphere of prevention, screening and public health in general. We describe initiatives across the world, including specific experiences that cover aspects as diverse as teratology services and services for migrant women, and ranging from volunteer association to state-funded public services.

The final section describes the research landscape. Again, the diversity of topics and approaches is staggering: from biomarkers to domestic violence, from motherhood in adolescence to cancer and pregnancy. Not unexpectedly, we also discuss the implications of the COVID-19 pandemic in the perinatal period.

While this preface can only scratch the surface of such an exhaustive and comprehensive book, we want to emphasise the passion and the empathy that emanate from all contributions.

The passion that brings together clinicians, mental health practitioners and researchers from such a variety of backgrounds, united by the notion of helping not only a mother in difficulties but also her developing offspring, and thus contributing to improving mental health of the next generation.

And the compassion for some of the most vulnerable people in our society: women and children whose suffering does not originate in an individual vacuum but instead often represents the society's failure to look after those in the direst need.

Milan, Italy
Milan, Italy
Milan, Italy
London, UK

Mauro Percudani
Alessandra Bramante
Valeria Brenna
Carmine Pariante

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