

Marcé' of North America Newsletter

JULY 2023



Marcé
of North America

Promoting Perinatal Mental Health



MONA Statement - SCOTUS Decision

Last week, the Supreme Court of the United States issued several decisions that have significant consequences for the field of perinatal mental health. As a leading organization promoting perinatal mental health across the United States, Canada, and Mexico, these decisions defy the Marcé of North America's (MONA's) vision of a world in which childbearing people, their children, and families can experience mental health and well-being and thrive.

First, the Court ruled against the use of race-conscious admissions policies in higher education. This decision overturns nearly 45 years of precedent in advancing equity and undermines decades of progress in increasing diversity in our healthcare workforce. We hold up Justice Jackson's dissent that "deeming race irrelevant in law does not make it so in life". This truth is particularly salient in the American healthcare system today. The Supreme Court's decision is fundamentally at odds with

MONA's advocacy for and commitment to cultivation of a workforce pipeline reflective of the vibrant communities we serve.

Second, the Court ruled in favor of a businesses' right to refuse services to a population based on religious beliefs. MONA admonishes this decision, specifically acknowledging the adverse mental health impacts of any form of discrimination. This adversity is particularly salient to the LGBTQI+ community, who is directly impacted by this decision and who faces existing disparities in health outcomes. MONA remains resolute in championing equity and inclusion in our organization and the care we deliver. We remain dedicated to ensuring all individuals with perinatal mental health conditions receive compassionate and equitable care.





MEMBER OF THE MONTH : JESSICA VERNON MD

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1. What is your current professional role?

Clinical Assistant Professor and Director of Perinatal Mental Health, Dept of OB/GYN at NYU Medical Director of Perinatal Mental Health at Hey Jane

2. What drew you to the field of Perinatal Mental Health?


I have always had a holistic approach to my work supporting people throughout their reproductive journey and have seen even more the past few years the importance of treating both mind and body. My lived experience with postpartum anxiety, depression, and OCD after the birth of my first daughter led to my passion for perinatal mental health. Caring for someone who has a poor obstetric history as they navigate a subsequent pregnancy and being there for the birth of their baby is the most special experience for me as a clinician. Helping someone feel less alone and validating them when they are struggling postpartum or feel stigmatized during pregnancy has brought so much more purpose to my work. For me, being able to do this work and help others not struggle as I did truly is a calling and I am so grateful to have the clinical expertise to be able to create a niche for myself in this field.

3. What is your current research involvement?

I am a recipient of the Pickler Gold Grant for Humanism in Medicine, with the goal to create an evidence-based curriculum aimed to equip OBGYN residents and faculty with the knowledge and comfort to diagnose and treat perinatal mood and anxiety disorders (PMADs). My colleague and I piloted a didactic series for the OB/GYN residents at NYU and are now collaborating with experts from NCRP to create a comprehensive curriculum in reproductive psychiatry for OB residents throughout the country.

4. What does a typical work day look like for you-including before and after work?

I am currently on maternity leave after the birth of my second daughter 3 months ago (and I am happy to say this postpartum experience has been so much better!) While on leave from NYU I have developed and launched a perinatal mental health digital platform through Hey Jane to help increase access to quality perinatal mental health care. When working at NYU, I spend my days either in the office which is a high volume, high risk academic faculty group practice, or on labor and delivery (24 hour in house calls). In the outpatient office



I have worked with the wonderful reproductive psychiatrists at NYU to create a collaborative care program for perinatal mental health and I personally see patients with uncomplicated anxiety and depression, referring the higher risk, more complex patients to the reproductive psychiatrists. I also enjoy providing obstetric care for patients with a history of obstetric trauma and am often referred these patients to provide them with continuity and extra support. Before work I am either walking the dog, feeding the baby, or getting my 4 year old ready for school, and after work I am spending time with my family either at home or in our neighborhood in downtown Manhattan.

5. What are you most excited about in your current work?

I feel like I have the best of both worlds right now- the digital program I am developing is able to rapidly iterate based on patient, clinician, and community stakeholder feedback. It is really exciting to see how startups can make changes quickly to improve the experience and the model of care in real time. In the academic setting I have the resources of the institution which involves my amazing colleagues and the residents and medical students who are also passionate about perinatal mental health and want to help with research and education. Implementing change in a large organization is much slower at times but to see in real life the difference we are making for our patients is so rewarding.

6. What's one of the most important things you've learned from a mentor or role model?

Dr. Iffath Hoskins, the current ACOG president, was at NYU until recently and always made time to come and sit and have a “civilized dinner” with my colleagues and I when we were on call together. She is such a powerhouse and has done so much with her career but is also very motherly and really cares about her mentees. Whenever I would get frustrated with how slow progress was happening with certain projects she would have me focus on what we had accomplished and what the next tangible step was- the small wins that I tended to lose in search of the big picture goal. This always helps me find perspective when things seem to be moving too slowly.

7. What are your favorite things to do outside of work?

I love to read and write. I also really enjoy New York City, from live music to theater to art. The city is even more amazing now seeing it all through my 4 year old's eyes.

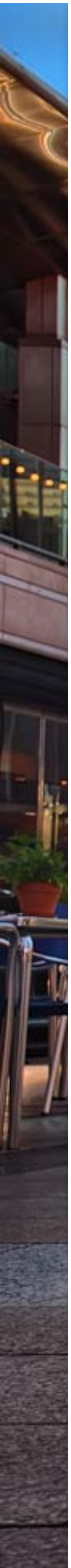
8. What is the most interesting book, podcast, TV series, or movie you've encountered in the past year?

Book: The Candy House



TV series: Ted Lasso

Podcast: Oprah's Super Soul Podcast





PAPER OF THE MONTH : REID MERGLER MD

JULY PAPER OF THE MONTH

Review written by: Reid Mergler, MD; Assistant Professor at the University of Pennsylvania, Penn Center for Women's Behavioral Wellness

Article: Sakowicz A, Allen E, Alvarado-Goldberg M, Grobman WA, Miller ES. Association Between Antenatal Depression Symptom Trajectories and Preterm Birth.

doi:10.1097/AOG.0000000000005125

The Problem: In the United States, preterm birth is the leading cause of perinatal mortality, and several studies have shown an association between antenatal depression and preterm birth. This paper addressed whether an improvement in depressive symptoms before delivery was associated with reduction in preterm birth in a collaborative care setting.

The Study: This is a retrospective cohort study that included pregnant people who were referred to a perinatal collaborative care program called COMPASS (Collaborative Care Model for Perinatal Depression Support Services); referrals were done directly from their obstetric provider, after a positive depression screen or by self-referral if a new or pre-existing mental health concern was identified. In COMPASS, Patient Health Questionnaire-9 (PHQ-9) surveys are sent every 2 weeks when symptomatic and every 4 weeks once symptoms are in remission. A stepped care approach to treatment based on PHQ-9 scores is used with additional supports including a care manager and the possibility for psychiatric consultation. Patients were included in this study if they were referred to COMPASS during pregnancy, had at least 2 PHQ-9 scores available between referral date and delivery and delivered after 20 weeks gestational age (GA) between March 2016-March 2021. For these patients, demographic and clinical information was abstracted from the electronic health record. The primary outcome was preterm birth, defined as any delivery after 20 weeks and before 37 weeks, and data for this outcome were abstracted from the EHR. For analyses, the first PHQ-9 screening performed after the COMPASS referral and the last performed before delivery were reviewed. Depression symptom trajectories were categorized as worsened, improved, or stable based on a change in PHQ-9 scores by 5 points. Bivariate analyses were performed with confounders included as independent variables.

The Findings: Overall, 732 subjects who had at least 2 PHQ-9 scores were included in the study. The baseline PHQ-9 was completed at median GA of 17 weeks and the last PHQ-9 before delivery was at a median GA of 34 weeks. Antenatal depressive symptoms improved in 35%, remained stable in 59.7% and worsened in 5.3% of subjects; the frequency of preterm birth was significantly higher in those with worsened depressive symptoms. The study suggests that an improved antenatal depressive symptom trajectory was associated

with a 60% reduction in the odds of preterm birth compared with a worsened trajectory.

Comments: The study demonstrates how a collaborative care model can be successful and effective in improving depressive symptoms and this can have a meaningful impact on birth outcomes. Although there are limitations to the study including referrals for other mental health concerns and the lack of significance in the sensitivity analysis, it highlights the importance of mental health care in routine obstetric care.

MONA Member Veerle Bergink, MD, PhD - Awarded the Alexa Symonds Award

Read about it below!



<https://www.psyc...>

www.psychnews.org

Bergink is the director of the Women's Mental Health Program at the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai and a professor in the departments of Psychiatry and Obstetrics, Gynecology, and Reproductive Science. The Alexandra Symonds Award was established in 1997 to honor a woman psychiatrist who has made significant contributions to promoting women's health and the advancement of women.

MARCÉ OF NORTH AMERICA [MONA] 2023 CONFERENCE

Emerging from the Pandemic:

EQUITY AND INNOVATION IN PERINATAL MENTAL HEALTH

OCTOBER 25-28, 2023 | WESTIN HOTEL, ALEXANDRIA, VA

Save the date!



 **Marcé**
of North America
Promoting Perinatal Mental Health

LATE-BREAKING ABSTRACT SUBMISSION

Do you have brand-new data of high impact that wasn't ready for submission to the MONA conference in May? We are now accepting submissions for late-breaking poster abstracts, due August

1. Please note that this submission is for posters only and that all abstracts must reflect completed studies with data results included in the abstract. Case reports, literature reviews, and studies for which data collection has not yet been completed will not meet the criteria for acceptance. Abstract Notifications will be sent out September 1! If you have any questions please email Marce @meetingachievements.com

 **Oxford Abstracts**

app.oxfordabstracts.com

SPONSORSHIPS & EXHIBITORS

We are looking for sponsors and exhibitors to participate in our exhibit hall at the 2023 fall conference. Please see more information on the attached prospectus regarding these opportunities for applicable companies and non profits organizations. If you have any questions, please contact Marce@meetingachievements.com



MONA Prospectus 2023.pdf

 **Download**

1.2 MB

CHECK OUT OUR KEYNOTE LINE-UP BELOW!

Please see the featured keynote speakers of our fall conference including their talk titles. You can view the entire conference agenda [here](#).

Please see the list of Pre Conference Workshops on **Wednesday, October 25th, 2023** [here](#).

MONA CONFERENCE 2023 KEYNOTE SPEAKERS



ANTONIA BIGGS, PhD

"Forecasting the impact of the Supreme Court's decision to overturn Roe v Wade on the wellbeing of pregnant people and their families"



DANI DUMITRIU, MD, PhD

"The COVID19 generation: effects of maternal SARS-CoV-2 infection and the pandemic environment on infants born during the pandemic"



SHEEHAN FISHER, PhD

"Perinatal Mental Health of Non-Birthing Parents: An Inclusive Discussion"



CAMILLE HOFFMAN, MD, MSCS

"Prenatal Choline: A Simple Intervention to Improve Multigenerational Mental Health"



KAREN MARTINEZ, MD, MCS

"The state of perinatal mental health in Puerto Rico and other Spanish-speaking countries"



TAMARA LEWIS-JOHNSON, MPH, MBA

"NIMH Priorities in Maternal Mental Health Research"



ABIGAIL ORTIZ, MD, MSC, FRCPC

"Wearables and Machine Learning: A New Dawn in Maternal Mental Health Research"



JENNIFER RICHARDS, PhD, MPH

"Developing a Doula Program for Perinatal Health for Indigenous Women"



STEPHANIE SPENCER, BSN, RN, BA, LCCE, CLC

"Urban Baby Beginnings: A Community Based Intervention"

The conference will be offering HYBRID options with registration for In Person and Virtual available. Members receive a 20% discount on conference registration. Please email Marce@meetingachievements.com if you need your membership code.

REGISTER FOR THE FALL 2023 CONFERENCE

The conference will be offering HYBRID options with registration for In Person and Virtual available. Members receive a 20% discount on conference registration. Please email Marce@meetingachievements.com if you need your membership code.



Conference Social Event: Cherry Blossom Dinner Cruise

Friday, October 27th, 2023

Boarding is 6pm, Cruise time is 6:30pm-9:30pm

Enjoy an evening cruise on the Potomac River aboard the Cherry Blossom. The Cherry Blossom is an authentic re-creation of a 19th Century Riverboat, as well as one of only 6 coast guard certified working sternwheelers in the country. A three hour open bar is included (Beer, wine, and soda) as well as a dinner of heavy hors d'oeuvres. Her two interior salons are heated and air-conditioned for year-round comfort. The open-air third deck offers a spectacular view of Old Town Alexandria and the Washington, D.C. skyline.



**Downtown
Alexandria**



**Westin
Alexandria, VA**



Potomac River

REGISTER FOR HOTEL ROOMS FOR CONFERENCE

Start Date: Tuesday, October 24, 2023 End Date: Saturday, October 28, 2023 Last Day to Book: Tuesday, October 3, 2023 Hotel(s) offering your special group rate: The Westin Alexandria Old Town for 169 USD per night

Marce of North America (MONA) and Marce International LISTSERV

Hello Members!

As a reminder you are encouraged to use the MONA Listserv for professional advice, referrals, trainings, announcements and important topics that you would like to share with the Marce of North America Community.

You must be a member to post on the Listserv with your email registered. Once you send something to the listserv it is always held for review and approve before it is posted. You will be added to the listserv after enrolling for membership. You will have to confirm via email and opt in.

Please Email MONA@simplelists.com to send a message to the Marce of North America Listserv.

International Marce Society Discussion List

To post to this list, send your message to: discussion@lsrv.marcesociety.com



DO YOU HAVE SOMETHING TO SHARE?



Please email job postings, fellowships, awards, publications, members in the media , advocacy news, etc to Marce@meetingachievements.com for future newsletters, we would LOVE to hear from you!




Marce of North America

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The Marcé Society of North America is committed to the advancement of Clinical Care, Research, Advocacy, and Education.

 marce@meetingachievements.com  219.465.1115

 marcenortham.com

