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Child and adolescent mental health services meeting the needs of a diverse community in the heart of Germany

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The demographics of the military population posted to Germany is surprisingly diverse. Families are mainly made up of British, European and Commonwealth. Currently there are large proportions of Fijian, Nepalese, Caribbean families and of British and German couples. There are also many blended families with step-fathers parenting several children who biologically not theirs. British Forces Germany subcontract healthcare to SSAFA (The armed forces charity) and currently employ two Clinical Nurse Specialists and one part-time Consultant Psychiatrist from the world-renowned SlaM (South London and Maudsley). It is the job of these professionals to meet the mental health needs of the children in the community who are entitled to the services; children of soldiers and civilians. Knowledge between this small team is vast largely due to lack of other available specialist and this provides diversity of casework incomparable to UK counterparts. The team interacts between German schools, British Schools, German hospitals; including psychiatric hospitals, welfare officers among others. Consideration for diversity is at the forefront of every interaction. They have successfully managed very serious mental illnesses, high risk patients and have implemented some of the most successful treatments possible. The ability to provide successful treatment is connected to the reality of the family remaining in BFG and ultimately the soldier's career. Patient satisfaction is outstanding, the team have the dedication to remove waiting lists, work intensively and systemically to provide this outcome; this is despite high caseload numbers, large geographical area (Germany, Belgium and Netherlands). The CAMHS team in BFG is fascinating, complex, unique and largely unknown.

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Prenatal anti-depressant exposure and the risk of autism spectrum disorders in children: Are we looking at the fall of Gods?

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Aim of this workshop is to analyze recent information suggesting that antenatal exposure to psycho-tropics may impair child neurodevelopment, by discussing available literature investigating potential associations between prenatal use of selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors (SSRIs) and the risk of autism spectrum disorders (ASDs). Despite the limitations shown by such studies (including lack of directly validated clinical evaluation, impossibility to identify women who really took the prescribed medications during pregnancy, no assessment of severity and course of symptoms in relation to the pregnancy, and the lack of information about unhealthy prenatal lifestyle behaviors), available data show that some signal exists suggesting that antenatal exposure to SSRIs may increase the risk of ASDs. Thus, there is an urgent need for further, large, well-designed research finalized to definitively assess the existence and the magnitude of this severe risk, thus confirming or denying that we are truly looking at "the fall of Gods", since for many years SSRIs have been considered the first-choice agents for treating antenatal depression.

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