LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Maternity in the Brazilian CV Lattes: when will it become a reality?

FERNANDA STANISCUASKI, EUGENIA ZANDONÀ, FERNANDA REICHERT, ROSSANA C. SOLETTI, LETICIA DE OLIVEIRA, FELIPE K. RICACHENEVSKY, ALESSANDRA S.K. TAMAJUSUKU, LIVIA KMETZSCH, IDA V.D. SCHWARTZ, FERNANDA P. WERNECK, ZELIA M.C. LUDWIG, ELIADE F. LIMA, CAMILA INFANGER, ADRIANA NEUMANN, ALESSANDRA BRANDÃO, GIULIA A. WIGGERS, ADRIANA SEIXAS & PAMELA B. MELLO-CARPIES

Despite the increasing attention on the causes generating the observed gender gap in science and the efforts in resolving it, women are still underrepresented in academia, especially in STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) fields (Shauman 2017). This scenario is also observed in Brazil (Barros & Mourão 2020, Areas et al. 2020). Many factors can contribute to the observed gender gap in science, but maternity is certainly playing an important role (Sallee et al. 2016). Maternity leave, which in Brazil ranges from four to six months, often leads to a decrease in productivity, affecting women competitiveness for a few years after the birth of a child (Machado et al. 2019). For this reason, funding agencies and universities should consider maternity leave as a career break and create strategies to circumvent its negative effect in the evaluations of researchers’ productivity.

The #maternidadenoLattes movement, together with a letter signed by different Brazilian scientific societies in June 2018, gained momentum in the social networks and in the mainstream media. In March 2019, CNPq officially announced that scientists, both men and women, could facultatively include the date of birth (or adoption) of their children in the Lattes CV database (CNPq 2019). Unfortunately, more than a year after the announcement, CNPq has still not implemented the promised change.
Right now, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, scientists who are mothers have experienced, more than ever, difficulties working from home and maintaining their productivity (Myers et al. 2020), as childcare is mostly under the responsibility of these women (Staniscuaski et al. 2020a). Data collected in a survey by our group showed that female academics, especially Black women and mothers, are experiencing difficulties to submit papers as planned and to meet deadlines during the pandemic period (Staniscuaski et al. 2020b).

Public policies with the objective to mitigate the motherhood penalty in science, such as childcare at the workplace and project and fellowship extensions, are thus pressing. In this scenario, setbacks are unacceptable. Therefore, it is essential that CNPq, the main Brazilian research funding agency, urgently creates the field to include data regarding maternity in the Lattes CV database. This cannot be yet another broken promise.

REFERENCES

AREAS R ET AL. 2020. Gender and the Scissors Graph of Brazilian Science: From Equality to Invisibility. OSF Preprints. DOI: 10.31219/osf.io/m6eb94.

How to cite

Manuscript received on August 28, 2020; accepted for publication on October 12, 2020

FERNANDA STANISCUASKI1
https://orcid.org/0000-0003-2155-1330

EUGENIA ZANDONÀ2
https://orcid.org/0000-0003-4754-5326

FERNANDA REICHERT3
https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5639-5879
Author contributions
All authors contributed to the intellectual conception, writing and preparation of the letter.