

DR. MARISA LÓPEZ-TEIJÓN

Fulfilling the desire of many to be Parents



Children' are a gift. While many are blessed with this gift other strive to attain this beautiful blessing. The desire to have a baby and to take unforeseen measures to make it happen is something that has remained the same throughout the history of humankind, not so the motivations and the ways of making it happen. *"Reproduction specialists are meeting new profiles of patients, which reflect the changes in our society, a new social horizon,"* she notes.

And, **She** can be trusted as she is suited for the job. She is **'Dr. Marisa López-Teijón'**, who has dedicated her entire life to helping families achieve their dream of becoming parents. It all started almost 100 years ago. The year was 1922, treaties were signed, a new pope was elected and Barcelona witnessed a sporting revolution, and somewhere in Barcelona Dr. Vicens Marquès i Bertran began practicing as a gynaecologist. He started Institut Marquès which is an integrated center with a well-established, internationally recognized reputation in the field of Obstetrics & Gynecology and Assisted Reproduction. *"Institut Marquès owes its name to the family whose members have represented the center's unity and continuity throughout time,"* quotes Marisa. And she is continuing its legacy.

Marisa was appointed as **General Director** for Institut Marquès in the year 2000. Since the earliest, she knew her destiny as it was always directed towards Assisted Reproduction and Gynecology. She went on to earn a degree in medicine and specialized in Obstetrics and Gynecology, and later became the **Chief Executive Officer** of Institut Marquès. Following to become a member of the Governing Board of Sterility and Infertility Section of the Spanish Society for Gynecologists. She shares, *"Around the end of the '80s, we introduced very advanced techniques for the time and improved the already existing assisted reproduction techniques. In 1989, we inaugurated our first In-Vitro-Fertilization Laboratory. Throughout the following years, the laboratory kept on expanding and incorporated the newest techniques. The fourth generation of gynecologists of the Marquès family, Dr. Borja Marquès, is now also part of the clinic's team."* Currently, Marisa manages Institut Marquès's General Management, the consultation, and the Research and Development Project Team. She feels gratified as the scientific platform ResearchGate has set her among the top 10% of the most influential researchers in the world.

CREATING FAMILIES AROUND THE WORLD

Marisa believes that life begins when a single woman, a single man, or a couple who loves each other dream of having a baby. She says, *"Each of them is a miracle, a love story."* Unfortunately, fertility problems have increased over the past years. This is due to different factors, such as the delay in the age for having the first child, as well as the sperm quality, which has been decreasing in recent years, especially in industrialized areas. In addition, one must also take into account the appearance of new family models that expand the profile of women who opt for motherhood, either as a couple or on their own. *"For me, motherhood is a right, not a duty, and I am proud to help women who decide when, how, and with whom they want to have their child,"* she quotes. Along with her team, Marisa follows the principles of honesty and transparency, quality, and safety to help families with fertility issues; fulfill their dream of parenthood. Dedicating a large part of the company's resources to new processes and R + D + I to continuously improve its treatments and services is part of its identity. Institut Marquès has the added value of being a reference in the study of male sterility. It also has its sperm bank and

a broad donation program of oocytes and embryos. With a broad portfolio of services, Institut Marquès obtains the best success rates, reaching 91% per cycle in IVF treatments with donor eggs. Nowadays, Institut Marquès has centres in Spain (Barcelona and Sabadell), Italy (Milan and Rome), and UK (London).

The journey was not easy for Marisa as she was faced with many roadblocks and challenges. *"We have overcome them with a lot of work, a lot of enthusiasm, and a team with the best professionals. That is how we manage that hundreds of children are born every year in more than 50 countries,"* she addresses. Additionally, she had to break down many barriers to succeed in a male-dominated world.

"Men with a title or a position are taken for granted; women have to prove they are worth it," expresses Marisa.

For many years, she was the only woman in charge of a fertility clinic and has faced many irrelevant and sexist questions which she handled with presenting overwhelming counters, for examples, she quotes, *"at congresses I was asked whom I had left my children with, and I answered with*

the same question. I think that advanced societies like ours will become more and more egalitarian." She understands the presence of discrimination in many workforce ecosystems and asks women to pursue excellence—as excellence is not perfection; excellence is not predicting the future but inventing it by carrying out innovative and courageous projects. She also believes that excellence is a state of mind that involves determination, ingenuity, and fun. *"Excellence is to exceed expectations,"* says Marisa. To eradicate such obstacles and achieve success, she beautifully harnessed her determination and passion for her work. She greatly celebrates dedicating her life to the 'embryonic passion'. *"And I do it with a great deal of work, a lot of enthusiasm, and surrounding myself with the best professionals,"* adds Marisa. She relies on her creativity and ability to think out of the box. She quotes, *"Creativity is neither a subject taught at school nor an occupation but an art of living"*. It requires a lot of discipline and she keeps the curiosity alive with the question like 'why do things happen', not taking anything for granted. *"I have always hated the idea of 'it has always been like this' or 'it is impossible', as well as all established norms,"* she adds. Marisa also comprehends

the significance of being a team worker. She believes through proper teamwork one can sustain the disruption happening in the world. Whereas in the healthcare industry, progress in technology is changing how things work and innovation in healthcare should be oriented towards facilitating processes for patients. *"This is my personal goal: to keep on innovating and working in research and development. Consequently, my best lesson is that we must be prepared for continuous changes in all aspects. Therefore, we are constantly carrying out innovative scientific studies to improve Assisted Reproduction treatments. Music, mobile technology, telemedicine, and the use of virtual reality are some of the innovations that Institut Marquès is already using in its clinics,"* she adds.

FOR WOMEN; WITH WOMEN

As a health company, almost 90% of her company's employees are women. *"At Institut Marquès, working hours are from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. This is exceptional in Spain, where most companies and stores are open until 8 p.m. This helps a lot with family conciliation,"* she continues. Being a woman, a feminist, and a gynaecologist, she feels glad that at her company she and her team celebrate every time a girl on the team

shares that she is pregnant. *"They usually tell me before anyone else because they know I get very happy,"* smiles Marisa. She also describes her displeasure with entities who consider pregnant women aren't competent. She says, *"I cannot stand people who believe that a pregnant woman is weak and must be protected or removed from work."* She believes that when a woman carries life inside her, it gives a supernatural strength that she has to know how to use. *"It should lead her to fight more than ever for what she wants for herself and to demonstrate it to her son or daughter. Both in the short and long term,"* she adds.

BREAK THE STATUS QUO

Marisa mostly spends her

time every day thinking and writing about professional and personal issues. For example, when she was blessed with her first grandson, she shares, "I wrote letters to him as he was still in his mum's belly about the feelings of hope and love that he generated in me." In addition, she likes to follow her passion for educating more and more people about assisted reproduction. She unceasingly interacts with her patients and is available 24/7 through social media. *"My blog has more than 850,000 followers and my new Instagram profile has reached 5,000 in a short time,"* shares Marisa.

To all emerging women leaders, Marisa's advice is to stay determined and not allow anyone to divert their

dreams. *"It is still common to have pressure from your family environment. In many situations, people can make you feel you selfish, or like someone who puts her dreams and decisions before the family,"* she explains. She asserts that the only people who deserve to enter one's circle of beloved ones are those who support one's happiness and learning process. Moreover, she recommends them to preserve their childlike curiosity and eliminate the sense of 'taking anything for granted'. *"Also, to avoid false beliefs or excuses such as 'it has always been done that way', 'that has never been seen before,' 'it is impossible' or 'the rules are already set,'"* concludes Marisa.

