

SEXUAL AND RELATIONAL WELLBEING DURING THE TRANSITION TO PARENTHOOD

Exploring how relationship quality and sexual wellbeing impact each other in new parent couples from pregnancy to postpartum.

**Longitudinal associations between relational
and sexual well-being in couples transitioning to
parenthood**

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*Scroll to see
what we found!*



During the **transition to parenthood**
(pregnancy to 1 year postpartum),
couples face **many new challenges**.

These challenges have been shown
to have **negative impacts** on their
sexual and relational wellbeing.



What is sexual wellbeing?

Sexual wellbeing has **two** important dimensions:

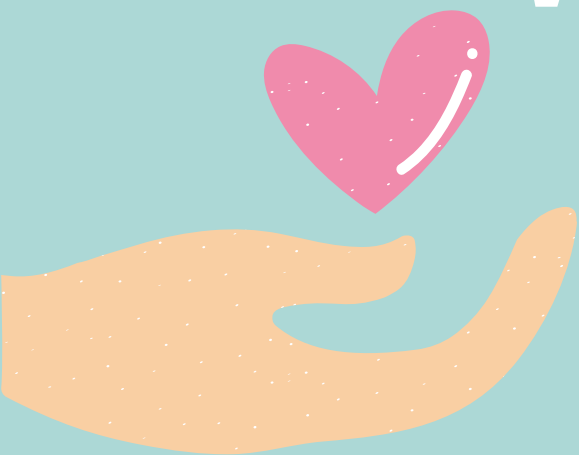
Sexual distress: negative emotions relating to sex such as worry, frustration, or shame.

Sexual satisfaction: positive aspects of the sexual experience such as pleasure, arousal, and desire.



What is relationship quality?

One's feelings of happiness and positive views of their relationship.



WE WANTED TO KNOW:



Q: How do new parents' relationship quality and sexual wellbeing influence each other across the transition from pregnancy to postpartum?

WHAT WE DID:

We looked at 257 couples who were in a long-term relationship and were pregnant with their first child.



We asked them to fill out self report questionnaires at four different points from 20-weeks of pregnancy to 6 months postpartum.



WE FOUND THAT...



Across the **transition to parenthood** couples experienced a **decrease** in **relationship quality** and **sexual satisfaction**, and an **increase** in **sexual distress**.

Additionally...

During **pregnancy**, those with **better relationship quality** also had **greater sexual satisfaction** and **lower sexual distress**.

Over time, if a couple experienced a **decrease** in **relationship quality**, it was associated with a **decrease** in **sexual wellbeing**, and **vice versa**.

Interestingly...

When mothers experienced **high sexual distress** during pregnancy, **partners'** perceptions of their **relationship quality decreased** more quickly **across postpartum**.



SO WHAT DOES THIS MEAN?



Since relationship quality and sexual wellbeing have been shown to influence each other, promoting either sexual or relational wellbeing can have a positive effect on both.

Let's normalize relational challenges during pregnancy and postpartum.

Fostering a couple's relationship quality and sexual satisfaction will help them navigate the changes that occur through pregnancy and postpartum, while education can help couples prepare to face the challenges that may arise.

This is a summary of our published article:

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