

SEXUAL BELIEFS IN NEW PARENTHOOD

Understanding how sexual growth and destiny beliefs impact sexual wellbeing in the transition to parenthood.

Original Paper | [Published: 18 February 2022](#)

A Longitudinal Investigation of Couples' Sexual Growth and Destiny Beliefs in the Transition to Parenthood

[Meghan A. Rossi](#), [Emily A. Impett](#), [Samantha J. Dawson](#), [Sarah Vannier](#), [James Kim](#) & [Natalie O. Rosen](#) 

[Archives of Sexual Behavior](#) **51**, 1559–1575 (2022) | [Cite this article](#)



*Scroll to see
what we found!*



Sexual beliefs, or how individuals think about sexuality with their partners can be categorized in two ways:

- **Sexual Growth:** belief that sexual problems can be resolved through effort.
- **Sexual Destiny:** belief that sexual problems reflect partner incompatibility.

During challenging periods like the **transition to parenthood**, sexual beliefs often become **more prominent**.

Identifying factors that impact sexual well-being, can help new parents understand their sexuality during this period.



WE WANTED TO KNOW:



Do couples' **sexual growth** beliefs and **sexual destiny** beliefs correspond with changes in **couples' sexual well-being** in the **transition to parenthood** over time?

We recruited **203**
first-time parent couples
to complete **online**
surveys:



Individually, at **6** different time points,
assessing:



- 1 **Destiny** and **growth beliefs** at 32 weeks pregnant.
- 2 **Sexual satisfaction, desire, and distress** at 20 & 32 weeks pregnant and 3, 6, 9 & 12 months postpartum.

WE FOUND THAT...

1

We did not find evidence that new parents' sexual growth beliefs offered any benefits.

2

Sexual beliefs didn't impact couples' sexual well-being beyond the first 3 months after childbirth.



AND...

3

Mothers with **destiny beliefs** also reported **more distress** and less satisfaction 3 months postpartum

4

When **partners** of mothers also had **destiny beliefs**, both reported **higher desire** at 3 months postpartum.

5

Unexpectedly, when **partners** of mothers reported **growth beliefs** during pregnancy, **mothers** had **lower desire** at 3 months postpartum.



So, what does all of this mean?

Adding to knowledge of how **sexual growth** and **destiny beliefs** impact couples's sexual well-being, we identified that **intervening in late pregnancy** may:

- improve couples' sexual desire,
- prevent declines in new mothers' sexual satisfaction,
- prevent increases in sexual distress at 3 months postpartum.



This is a summary of our published article:

Rossi, M. A.g, Impett, E. A., Dawson, S. J., Vannier, S. A., Kim, J. & Rosen, N. O. (2022). *A longitudinal investigation of couples' sexual growth and destiny beliefs in the transition to parenthood*. Archives of Sexual Behavior, 51, 1559-1575.

<https://doi.org/10.1007/s10508-021-02267-3>



Blog Post and Infographic by: Sophie Marchetti