

Addressing the sexual difficulties of pregnancy loss for couples in clinical care and research

Despite its prevalence, **pregnancy loss has been relatively understudied**, specifically in relation to **how it may impact sexual health and well-being**. This study explores how pregnancy loss impacts the sexual well-being of couples, addressing gaps in previous research.



JOURNAL ARTICLE

Addressing the sexual difficulties of pregnancy loss for couples in clinical care and research [Get access >](#)

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The Journal of Sexual Medicine, Volume 21, Issue 6, June 2024, Pages 507–508,

<https://doi.org/10.1093/jsxmed/qdae044>

Published: 03 June 2024 [Article history](#) ▾

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what we found!*



Pregnancy loss affects up to 25% of women, but its impact on sexual well-being remains **under-researched**.

Previous studies mainly **focused on couples with multiple losses** or **lacked data from both partners**, limiting the guidance available for couples and practitioners.



we wanted to know:

The study aimed to provide a **more comprehensive understanding of how pregnancy loss affects sexual well-being** in couples.



148
couples

Were **recruited to** the Acknowledging Loss Outcomes and Experiences (**ALOE**) Study.

The couples had **experienced pregnancy loss in the last four months**. Both partners **completed monthly surveys for four months**, and a control group of couples without pregnancy loss was included for comparison.



we found that...

Couples who experienced pregnancy loss: reported...

- **Lower sexual satisfaction** at 3-4 months post-loss
- **Increased sexual desire discrepancies** between partners
- **No significant differences** in sexual desire, or sexual frequency compared to the control group
- **Lower sexual distress** than the control group (due to de-emphasized sexuality)



Qualitative responses from couples revealed additional insights...

- Negative **health and body image changes**
- Experience **sex as being mechanical and conception focused**
- Influence of **anxiety, fear, grief, and low mood**, on sexual well being
- Some **reported relationship growth and enhanced intimacy**
- **62% described at least one positive change** while **87% described negative changes**

- Pregnancy loss **affected couples in various ways** including across biological, psychological, and social/interpersonal dimensions
- Couples **may benefit from enhanced support** from health care professionals
- Some couples had **experiences where professionals neglected or invalidated their difficulties** during the loss

so, what does all of this mean?

Pregnancy loss **causes profound and varying changes** in the sexual well-being of couples. These changes and challenges encompass a broad number of aspects. Leading us to formulate and encourage **three main takeaways:**

- Healthcare providers should **discuss sexual well-being after pregnancy loss**, not just contraception.
- Support should be **offered for all pregnancy losses**, not just to couples with multiple losses
- **Both partners need attention and support** from medical professionals.

This is a summary of our published article:

Allsop, D. B.g & Rosen, N. O. (2024). Addressing the sexual difficulties of pregnancy loss for couples in clinical care and research. *Journal of Sexual Medicine*, 21(6), 507-508.

<https://doi.org/10.1093/jsxmed/qdae044>



Blog post and infographic by Audrey Chu