

DAILY PERCEIVED STRESS AND SEXUAL HEALTH IN COUPLES WITH SEXUAL INTEREST/ AROUSAL DISORDER (SIAD)

This study examined how daily perceived stress relates to sexual desire, satisfaction, and distress among couples coping with SIAD.



Scroll to see what we found!



Daily perceived stress and sexual health in couples with sexual interest/arousal disorder

A. Girouard ^a , S. Bergeron ^b , J.S. Huberman ^a , N.O. Rosen ^{a,c,*} 

^a Department of Psychology & Neuroscience, Dalhousie University, Halifax, NS, Canada

^b Department of Psychology, Université de Montréal, Montréal, QC, Canada

^c Department of Obstetrics & Gynaecology, Dalhousie University, Halifax, NS, Canada



Sexual Interest/Arousal Disorder (SIAD)* is characterized in the DSM-5-TR as **persistent and distressing low levels of sexual desire and/or arousal.**

SIAD is the **most common sexual problem among cisgender and transgender women**, and couples coping with SIAD report **lower sexual satisfaction, sexual desire, and greater sexual distress** compared to couples not coping with SIAD [1-4]

[1] Witting et al., 2008; [2] Kerckhof et al., 2019; [3] Wierckx et al., 2014; [4] Rosen et al., 2019



*The official diagnosis in the DSM-5-TR is Female Sexual Interest/Arousal Disorder (FSIAD). However, we removed “Female” for inclusivity purposes because people who do not identify as female (e.g., non-binary, transgender, intersex individuals) can still meet diagnostic criteria for SIAD. In this study, we refer to participants as women and gender diverse individuals with SIAD.

Existing research suggests that **stress is associated with lower sexual satisfaction and desire, and greater sexual distress** [5–7].

[5] Bodenmann et al., 2010; [6] Ferreira et al., 2015; [7] Kalmbach et al., 2019

Because **romantic partners influence one another's stress and well-being, one partner's stress may also affect the other partner's sexual health** [12, 13].

[12] Kelley & Thibaut, 1978; [13] Shrout, 2021

However, **little research has examined whether** daily perceived stress relates to sexual desire, satisfaction, or distress among couples coping with SIAD.





QUESTION & HYPOTHESES

1

QUESTION: Is daily perceived stress associated with sexual desire, satisfaction, and distress in couples coping with SIAD?

HYPOTHESIS: On days when individuals with SIAD report greater stress than usual, both partners would experience lower sexual desire, lower sexual satisfaction, and greater sexual distress.

2

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HYPOTHESIS: We expected partners of individuals with SIAD to show similar patterns.



N = 229
COUPLES

Women and gender diverse individuals with SIAD and their romantic partners

Participation involved:

- Independently completing daily online surveys for 56 days
- Reporting daily...
 - Perceived stress
 - Sexual satisfaction
 - Sexual desire
 - Sexual distress



WE FOUND THAT...

On days **when individuals with SIAD reported higher stress** than usual, **both partners reported:**

- ↓ **sexual satisfaction**
- ↓ **sexual desire**
- ↑ **sexual distress**



WE FOUND THAT...

On days **when partners reported higher stress** than usual, **both partners reported:**

- ↓ **sexual satisfaction**
- ↓ **sexual desire**

Partners (but not individuals with SIAD) also reported:

- ↑ **sexual distress**



SO, WHAT DOES ALL THIS MEAN?

This study found that **when either member of the couple experienced more stress** than usual, **both partners tended to report poorer sexual well-being that day.**



Results suggest that **stress may interfere with intimacy** and make it more difficult for partners to provide emotional support to one another. **Stress may also increase negative emotions and relationship tension**, which can reduce sexual desire and satisfaction while increasing sexual distress.

Future research could investigate the specific pathways through which stress affects sexual well-being in couples coping with SIAD.



THIS IS A SUMMARY OF OUR PUBLISHED ARTICLE:

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Infographic by Audrey Chu