

Change in 21 Sexual Concerns of New Parents From Three to Twelve Months Postpartum: Similarities and Differences between Mothers and Partners.

Allsop et al. (2022)

How does a mother and (her) partners' sexual concerns change from 3 to 12 months postpartum?



Method

203 couples, most white and heterosexual, and all with first-time mothers bearing their first child and residing from Canada or the US were sent online questionnaires on 21 postpartum sexual concerns (e.g., vaginal dryness, body image of the mother) at 3-, 6-, 9-, and 12-months postpartum.

Results showed that...

most of mothers' sexual concerns declined (i.e., 12 of 21) from 3 to 12 months postpartum, and several sexual concerns (i.e., 6 of 21) also declined in partners. These concerns included areas such as:

- child rearing duties
- pain during intercourse
- changes to frequency of intercourse.



And that...

Mothers expressed a greater initial concern than their partners for a majority of the rated concerns (i.e., 11 of 21) (e.g., vaginal dryness, energy for sex), while partners expressed greater initial concern than the mothers for a minority of the rated concerns (i.e., 4 of 21) (e.g., changes to the mother's body image)

Sexual concerns that did not increase or decrease over time remained stable for each respective partner.

In Summary...

This study has demonstrated that sexual concerns of mothers and their partners are different yet similar in many ways, and that each sexual concern may have their own tendency to increase, decrease, or remain stable 3 to 12 months following birth.

Anticipating how sexual concerns will change postpartum may help partners adjust more easily postpartum which may help reduce depressive symptoms

