

When the stars don't align:

A longitudinal investigation of couples' sexual and growth destiny beliefs in the transition to parenthood.
Archives of Sexual Behavior.

Rossi et al. (2022)

How are your beliefs about sexual satisfaction during pregnancy linked to your own and your partner's sexual well-being post-partum?

Sexual destiny beliefs: Believing that good sex comes from natural compatibility and "destiny"

Sexual growth beliefs: Believing that good sex comes from hard work and effort

Methods

203 couples completed online surveys in pregnancy and across the postpartum period assessing: their growth and destiny beliefs, sexual desire, satisfaction, and distress (e.g., worries and concerns about sex life) at 20- and 32-weeks pregnant, and 3-, 6-, 9-, and 12-months postpartum.



Results Showed That...



Mothers who more strongly believed that sexual satisfaction is based on natural compatibility (i.e. sexual destiny beliefs), they reported greater sexual desire, but also greater sexual distress and less sexual satisfaction at 3-months postpartum. When partners reported greater sexual destiny beliefs, new moms also reported greater sexual desire.

As for the belief that good sex comes from work and effort (i.e., sexual growth beliefs), this was actually related to new mom's lower sexual desire at 3-months postpartum.

In Short

The findings of this paper demonstrate that when mothers or their partners believe good sex to be innate (i.e., destiny beliefs, attributed to a compatible partner), the mothers would report a greater desire to have sex, than when either believed good sex came from hard work and progress (i.e., growth beliefs); However, they are generally more likely to report less sexual satisfaction and greater sexual distress after giving birth 3-months postpartum.



On the other hand, assuming good sex does come from hard work did not make mothers any more or less likely to have greater sexual satisfaction or distress, but it did make them more likely to report less desire after giving birth and has been speculated to be due to fatigue from additional parental stressors postpartum.