

The Effects of Sexual Abuse on Female Sexual Distress during Pregnancy

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The present study evaluates the effects of sexual abuse (SA) and traumatic life events (TLE) other than SA on female sexual distress (FSDS) in pregnant women. FSDS is characterized by negative feelings and anxiety about one's sexuality or sexual activity. Women who experienced TLE and women with a history of SA, especially with coerced penetration, are at risk of developing sexual problems and FSDS. In addition, sexual function significantly declines during pregnancy and for some women with a history of SA the pregnancy may be a constant reminder of the trauma which can lead to FSDS.

Measures used for data collection were The Socio-Demographic questionnaire that assesses socio-demographics, The Sexual Experience survey (SES) that assesses for sexual aggression and victimization, Female Sexual Distress Scale-Revised (FSDS-R) that assesses the participants experienced feelings of distress, guilt or regret regarding their sexual life and the Traumatic life Events Questionnaire that assesses the participant's traumatic life events. The present data sample consisted of 190 pregnant Jewish women, aged 17 to 45, recruited from the Poriya and Hillel Yaffe Medical Centers.

The data showed that SA and in particular SA with coerced penetration were significant predictors for FSDS. The risk for FSDS was found to be 7.4 times higher in women with a history of SA with penetration and 4.2 times higher in women with a history of SA without penetration. Data also indicated that the presence of TLE (other than SA) increased the risk for FSDS by 30%. This study can contribute to women's sexual health by evaluating the effects of SA and TLE on FSDS during pregnancy and broadening the knowledge on FSDS.

Keywords: Sexual abuse (SA), traumatic life event (TLE), female sexual distress (FSDS), sexual function, pregnancy, coerced penetration, rape, women's sexual well-being.

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