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# The effect of post-natal symptoms of post-traumatic stress and depression on the couple's relationship and parent-baby bond

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Pages 127-142 | Received 20 Sep 2007, Accepted 27 Mar 2008, Published online: 13 May 2009

Cite this article <https://doi.org/10.1080/02646830802350831>

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## Abstract

**Objectives:** Research has shown that between 1 and 3% of women may suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) following childbirth. However, the potential effect of childbirth on fathers, and the implications of post-natal symptoms of PTSD for family relationships, have received little attention. The current study therefore examined the potential effect of post-natal symptoms of PTSD on the couple's relationship and parent-baby bond.

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model that best fitted the data was one where PTSD symptoms had a direct effect on the parent-baby bond, but the effect of PTSD on the couples' relationship was mediated by depression.

Conclusions: The results indicate the importance of examining the psychological reactions of men and women after birth; and suggest that symptoms of PTSD have an effect on the parent-baby bond. However, methodological considerations mean further research is needed to replicate and extend this study before firm conclusions can be drawn.

Keywords: childbirth post-natal depression PTSD parent-baby bond couple's relationship

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