OUR AIM
• Becoming a parent is a time of stress and transition. We want to better understand factors related to good relationships during this time and how changes in relationships influence sexual health.

COMMUNITY & CLINICAL RELEVANCE
• Sexual risk most often occurs in romantic relationships.
• Poor relationships can lead to new or multiple partners, lack of communication or ending a relationship.
• 50% of relationships among young parents end by the time their baby is one year old.
• Pregnancy may be a good time to work with expecting couples to strengthen relationships because expecting parents are often motivated to make positive behavior changes.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS
• What contributes to good relationships during pregnancy?
• Do relationships influence sexual risk and health?

OUR PARTICIPANTS
• 296 pregnant adolescents and their male partners (592 participants total) enrolled in the study.
• 44% of participants were African-American, 38% Latino, 14% White, and 4% were of another self-reported race.
• The average age of mothers was 18.7 years old and 21.3 years old for fathers.

OUR STUDY
WE ASKED 296 YOUNG COUPLES WHAT IT IS LIKE TO BECOME PARENTS.
• To enroll, women had to be between the ages of 14 and 21, in their third trimester of pregnancy, and in a relationship with the father of their baby. Their partners had to be at least 14 years old.
• Participants were recruited from obstetrics and gynecology clinics in four university-affiliated hospitals in Connecticut.
• Couples completed 3 interviews—the first in the third trimester, then at six and twelve months post-partum—regardless of whether they stayed together.
• Participants answered questions about their physical and mental health, sexual behavior, relationship quality, and parenting experiences.

“Of course I am nervous about delivery, but I know my husband will support me through everything and help me get through it. He is my strength. The baby brought us closer together.” - Mom-to-be 2008
FINDINGS

RELATIONSHIP FUNCTIONING

- 65% of couples had at least one member that was not satisfied with the relationship.
- Good relationships related to better sexual communication, increased intentions to be faithful, decreased likelihood of having multiple partners and decreased likelihood of women getting an STD.

SEXUAL RISK

- Almost all participants, 97%, reported some unprotected sex in the past month.
- 70% reported no condom use in the past month.
- Nearly 40% reported sex outside of their current relationship.

IMPLICATIONS

- Clinicians should consider pregnant women’s relationships with their romantic partners because their relationships affect expecting women’s health.
- Healthy relationships may reduce the occurrence of sex outside the relationship and reduce risk for STDs.
- Programs that focus on strengthening relationships may help reduce young couples’ risk for HIV and STDs.

ABOUT US

PARTNRS, PARENTING AND RELATIONSHIP TRANSITION AND RISK STUDY, SEeks to understand sexual and reproductive health among young expectant fathers and their adolescent partners as they transition from pregnancy to parenthood. We are dedicated to understanding the context of relationships and health among young parents, with the ultimate goal of building programs that will strengthen families, improve sexual and reproductive health, and decrease the incidence of HIV and STDs.

TO LEARN MORE VISIT WWW.PARTNRSTUDY.COM