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Promoting Sexual Well-Being in the Postpartum Period



Background

- Postpartum decreases in sexual frequency, desire, and satisfaction are typical
- Many individuals report feeling unprepared for these changes and, thus, can experience significant distress and a strong desire to “get back to normal.”
- Current clinical and research approaches that equate these related, but distinct, outcomes (e.g., levels of desire) with sexual well-being can reinforce distress

Where we started

Scoping Review of Intervention Studies

- N = 12 studies evaluated the impacts of psychosocial interventions on sexual outcomes
- Revealed a need for a conceptual model of postpartum sexual well-being

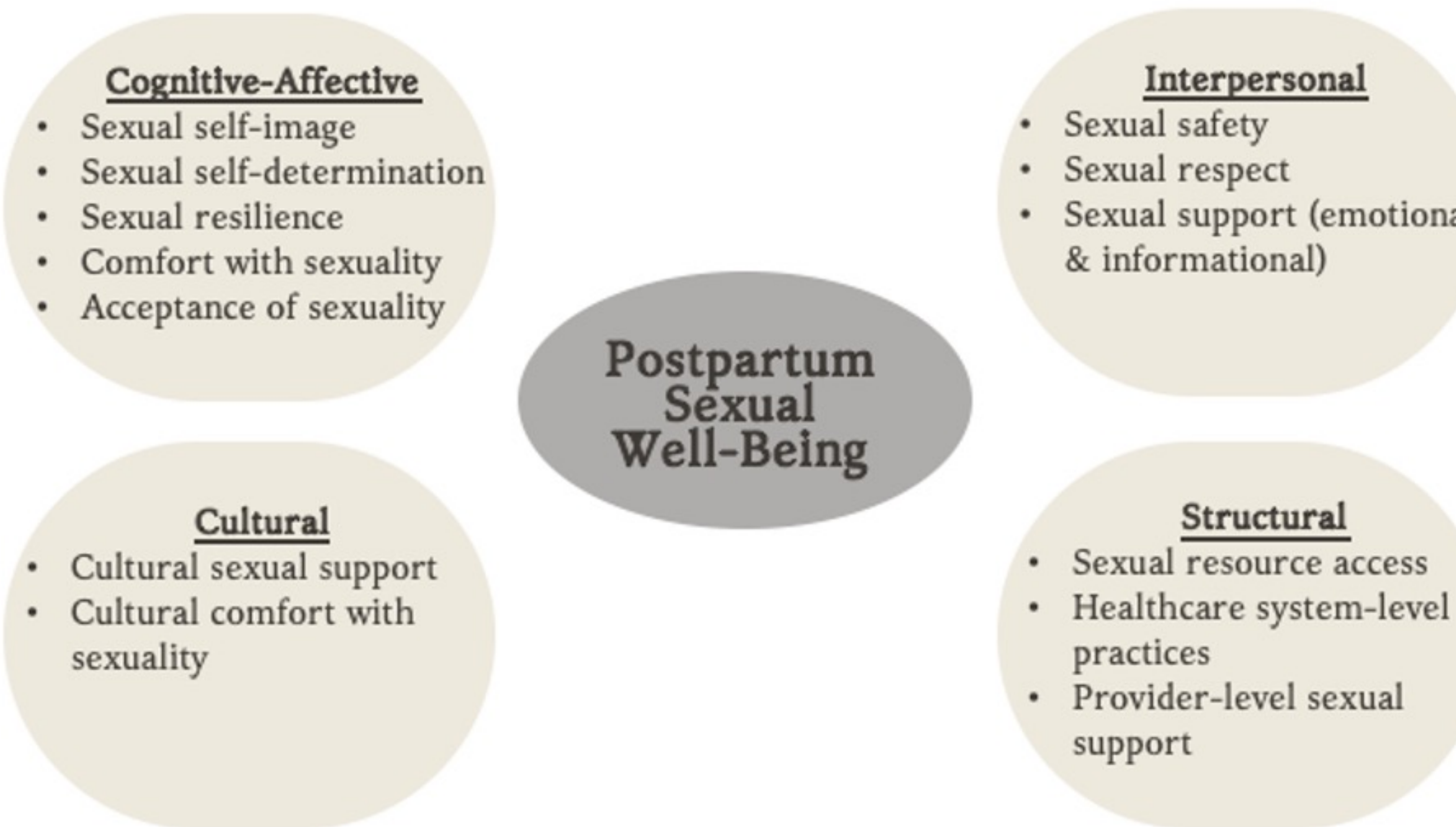


Qualitative Synthesis of Literature

- N = 38 studies focused on understanding postpartum sexual well-being across cultures
- Informed a comprehensive and person-centered conceptual model

“You feel like part of the problem if you did bounce back, and like a failure if you didn’t”

17 months postpartum, primiparous individual



“Sex is sex...that can wait...I just want to enjoy moments with my kids”

15 months postpartum, multiparous individual



Refining the model

- Six (out of 12-16) interviews have been conducted with individuals between 12-18 months postpartum
- Participants have confirmed the importance of domains identified in the qualitative synthesis
- Participants have helped shape the definitions of these domains through descriptions of their personal experiences and beliefs

Demographic Variables	Total (N=6)
Experiencing Significant Financial/Structural Barriers to Healthcare Access	67% (n=4)
Racial Identity	
White	50% (n=3)
Black	17% (n=1)
Mixed Race	33% (n=2)
Parity Status, Multiparous	67% (n=4)
Sexual Orientation	
Heterosexual	67% (n = 4)
Bisexual	33 % (n=2)
Partner Status	
Partnered, living together	50% (n=3)
Partnered, living separately	33% (n=2)

Next steps

- Continue conducting qualitative interviews until saturation is reached.
- Draft a preliminary item pool for a measure of sexual well-being based on the literature review and concept refinement.
- Conduct cognitive interviews to streamline the preliminary measure of sexual well-being.
- Analyze the measure for validity and reliability in a quantitative study with 250 individuals.