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## Psychological condition in Marital Adjustment Concerning First Parenthood

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### Abstract

During the first year after the baby is born. Relationship functioning is deteriorating for many new parents, as is widely known. New parents may also experience additional problems in their romantic relationship in addition to difficulty adjusting to new parenting tasks. To assess the level of Marital adjustment among first parents and find out the association between marital Adjustment for parents with socio-demographical data (age, gender, educational level , ect---). A descriptive cross-sectional study design was conducted at the community based population, primary health care centers in Baghdad city during the period extending from 15th September to 2022 to 26 th December 2022. The majority of the study sample was female, their age group between (19-24) year's old, age at marriage (18-23), h/w age at marriage (24-28) , bachelor degree , Unemployed housewife for mother and governmental employee among fathers. each of the following variables Marital Agreement, Marital Satisfaction, Marital Cohesion among Parents it was moderate level and Emotional Expression of Adjustment among Parents it was high level. Significant difference in relation to marital agreement with regard to fathers at p-value= .012 and there is significant difference in emotional expression with regard to fathers It means that fathers are more than mothers in marital adjustment during the first parenthood and significant relationships among maritaladjustment with most parents' socio-demographic characteristics. This study recommends Developing programs to inform fathers about what their wives go through and how to distinguish normal psychological fluctuations from pathological ones in order to avoid the development of the disease and the impact of the marital relationship or harm to the child.

**Keywords:** Effect, Psychological status, Marital Adjustment

### Introduction

Since the 1950s, there has been an expanding body of writing on the adjustment to motherhood. Researchers typically refer to the period between the third trimester of pregnancy and roughly the first child's second birthday as the transition-to-parenthood phase. The arrival of a child can bring a couple happiness and contentment, but it can also have detrimental effects on a marriage. The majority of study on this period of transition has discovered that the birth of a couple's first child has an impact on many other areas of the marital relationship, including marital adjustment. According to Feldman and Nash, "between the periods of expectation and parenting, one of the most profound shifts in the family life cycle, experienced by more than 80% of all adults, occurs. These new parents go through a period of transformation in their lives, which is accompanied by more responsibility and stress . The only occurrences that received higher stress ratings were losing a kid, losing a spouse, becoming seriously ill, entering jail, and getting divorced. ( 13)

The truth about relationships is that no matter whether they have children or not, all couples go through challenging times together. In fact, according to certain studies, couples with children and those without children are both subject to negative changes over the course of a similar amount of time. 1995. Cowan et al. Couples do, however, vary in the amount of change they go through. The transition to parenthood so seems to accelerate and magnify the changes that already exist. (6)

Primiparous parents go through this amazing, yet challenging, life change during the first year following a child's birth. Relationship functioning declines for many new parents, as is widely known. Primiparous parents may also experience additional problems in their romantic relationship in addition to the difficulty of adjusting to a new kid and new parental tasks. They frequently feel

more tension. ( 10)

### Objectives

- To assess the socio-demographic characteristics of the studied sample.
- To assess the level of marital adjustment among first parents.
- To find out the association between marital adjustment for parents with socio-demographical data (age, gender, educational level , ect----) .

### Methodology

At the community-based population, primary healthcare facilities in Baghdad city, a descriptive cross-sectional study design was carried out between September 15, 2022, and December 26, 2022. Five government-run primary health care facilities in Baghdad's Karkh and Rusafa health Directorates were used for the study. Al-Zahraa Health Center, Bashir Al-Jazaery Health Center, and Al-Dulai Health Center were chosen from the Kadhimiya sector, which was taken. From AL-Rusafa sectors, the Al Shaab area was picked, and from there, the Hee Al-Basateen and AlShaab health clinics were chosen.

A non-probability purposive sample of 300 first-time parents. It included 200 mothers and 100 fathers. Relying on previous studies, where there are no statistics on the number of births for the first time, according to the Statistics Book of the Ministry of Health 2022.

Marital Adjustment Scale (DAS) is a 31-item divided into 4 sections, each part is used to examine a specific topic in the marital relationship, which is as follows rating instrument response by either one person in a relationship, or both. Each question is rated on a Likert-type scale, with the best response possibilities being selected by the respondents. DAS comprises the following four subscales. Respondents are also asked to indicate how much they and their spouse agree or disagree with each item. Marital Agreement . This part contains questions that discuss agreement between spouses in all respects and included 15 questions about it, Marital Satisfaction. This part contains questions that discuss satisfaction between spouses in all respects and included 9 questions about it, Marital Cohesion: This part contains questions that discuss cohesion between spouses in all respects and included 5 questions about it, Emotional Expression: This part contains questions that discuss emotional expression between spouses in all respects and included 2 questions about it.

Validity obtained by 20 experts, while reliability obtained by using statistical interclass correlation coefficient (0.932), which is statistically Excellent, statistical analysis of the data performed by using statistics package program for social sciences (SPSS version 26).

### Ethical consideration

- a. Approval of the ethics committee of Babylon University's college of nursing.
- b. Consent of the participants after explain the purposes of the study to them and telling them that the data are used only for research and they are free to accept or refuse the participation in this study.
- c. All the information gathered from participant was kept trusted and confidential .

### Data Collection

Between September 15, 2022, and December 26, 2022, data was collected. After receiving approval from the college ethical committee , the data was gathered. For the sample who couldn't read or write, the data was gathered through self-reporting and using the interview approach. The researcher delivered the questionnaire to the parents in person. Inside the health center, the researcher met several of the participants, In order to maintain the ethical consideration and respect for the participants' autonomy, the participants were informed of the study's objectives and given instructions on how to complete the questionnaire. They were also informed that the data would be treated strictly confidentially for research purposes only. Participants were given explanations for any questions they had trouble comprehending during the questionnaire completion procedure to ensure they gave accurate answers. It took them between 15 and 20 minutes to complete the entire questionnaire.

**Results**

**Table1: Distribution of the Study Sample Based on Sociodemographic Features**

List	Characteristics	F	%	
1	Age M±SD= 25±5	13 – 18 year	31	10.3
		19 – 24 year	123	41
		25 – 30 year	106	35.4
		31 – 36 year	36	12
		37 ≤ year	4	1.3
		<b>Total</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>100</b>
2	Parenthood	Mother	200	66.7
		Father	100	33.3
		<b>Total</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>100</b>
3	Age at marriage M±SD= 23.5±5	12 – 17 year	33	11
		18 – 23 year	128	42.7
		24 – 29 year	101	33.7
		30 – 35 year	34	11.3
		36 ≤ year	4	1.3
		<b>Total</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>100</b>
4	Husband/Wife age at marriage M±SD= 26±5	13 – 18 year	27	9
		19 – 23 year	71	23.7
		24 – 28 year	123	41
		29 – 33 year	57	19
		34 – 38 year	16	5.3
		39 ≤ year	6	2
		<b>Total</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>100</b>

f: Frequency, %: Percentage, M: Mean, SD: Standard deviation

**Table (2): Distribution of the Sample according on Educational Level**

Level of education	Mother		Father	
	F	%	F	%
Unable to read & write	10	3.3	16	5.3
Read & write	39	13	30	10
Primary school	24	8	41	13.7
Middle school	38	12.7	60	20
Secondary school	45	15	31	10.3
Diploma	42	14	39	13
Bachelor	99	33	77	25.7
Postgraduate	3	1	6	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>100</b>

f: Frequency, %: Percentage

**Table (3): Levels of Marital Agreement among Parents**

Marital Agreement	f	%	M	SD
Low	105	35	28.67	7.640
Moderate	128	42.7		
High	67	22.3		
<b>Total</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>100</b>		

f: Frequency, %: Percentage

M: Mean for total score, SD: Standard Deviation for total score

Low= 15 – 25, Moderate= 25.1 – 35, High= 35.1 – 45

**Table (4): Assessment the Level of Marital Agreement among Parents (N=300)**

No	Marital Agreement	Mean	SD	Assess.
1	Handling family finances	1.96	.802	Moderate
2	Matters of recreation	1.88	.709	Moderate
3	Religious matters	2.10	.749	Moderate
4	Demonstrations of affection	2.11	.721	Moderate
5	Friends	1.97	.705	Moderate
6	Sex relations	2.09	.766	Moderate
7	Conventionality (right or suitable action)	1.93	.779	Moderate
8	Philosophy of life	1.86	.744	Moderate
9	How to interact with your parents or in-laws	1.90	.780	Moderate
10	Aims, objectives, and items deemed significant	1.91	.722	Moderate
11	Amount of time spent together	1.93	.680	Moderate
12	Making major decisions	1.79	.731	Moderate
13	Household tasks	1.70	.792	Moderate
14	Leisure time interests and activities	1.62	.676	Low
15	Career decisions	1.92	.868	Moderate

No: Number, SD: Standard Deviation, Assess: Assessment

Low= 1-1.66, Moderate= 1.67-2.33, High= 2.34-3

**Table (5): Levels of Marital Satisfaction among Parents**

Marital Satisfaction	f	%	M	SD
Low	49	16.3	17.20	1.194
Moderate	245	81.7		
High	6	2		
<b>Total</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>100</b>		

f: Frequency, %: Percentage

M: Mean for total score, SD: Standard Deviation for total score

Low= 9 – 15, Moderate= 15.1 – 21, High= 21.1 – 27

**Table (6): Assessment the Level of Marital Satisfaction among Parents (N=300)**

No	Marital Satisfaction	Mean	SD	Assess.
1	How frequently do you talk about or have you thought about ending your relationship?	1.44	.639	Low
2	How frequently do you and your partner go outside after a fight?	1.63	.612	Low
3	Do you see that things between you and your husband are going well ?	2.15	.607	Moderate
4	Do you confide in your mate?	1.81	.705	Moderate
5	Do you ever wish you hadn't been married? (Or cohabitated)	1.68	.692	Moderate
6	How often do you and your partner quarrel?	2.01	.384	Moderate
7	How frequently does your relationship "get on each other's nerves"?	2.07	.468	Moderate
8	Do you kiss your mate?	2.28	.545	Moderate
9	Do you feel marital happiness?	2.13	.667	Moderate

No: Number, SD: Standard Deviation, Assess: Assessment

Low= 1-1.66, Moderate= 1.67-2.33, High= 2.34-3

**Table (7): Levels of Marital Cohesion among Parents**

Marital Cohesion	f	%	M	SD
Low	99	33	15.24	5.140
Moderate	175	58.3		

High	26	8.7		
<b>Total</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>100</b>		

f: Frequency, %: Percentage  
 M: Mean for total score, SD: Standard Deviation for total score  
 Low= 5 – 13.3, Moderate= 13.4 – 21.7, High= 21.8 – 30

**Table (8): Assessment the Level of Marital Cohesion among Parents (N=300)**

No	Marital Cohesion	Mean	SD	Assess.
1	Do you and your partner share any extracurricular activities?	2.06	1.158	Low
2	Have a thought-provoking discussion	3.85	1.521	Moderate
3	Laugh together	3.99	1.565	Moderate
4	Calmly discuss something	3.56	1.458	Moderate
5	Work together on a project	1.79	1.230	Low

No: Number, SD: Standard Deviation, Assess: Assessment  
 Low= 1-2.66, Moderate= 2.67-4.33, High= 4.34-6

**Table (9): Levels of Emotional Expression of Adjustment among Parents**

Emotional Expression	f	%	M	SD
Low	57	19	1.34	.753
Moderate	112	37.3		
High	131	43.7		
<b>Total</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>100</b>		

f: Frequency, %: Percentage  
 M: Mean for total score, SD: Standard Deviation for total score  
 Low= 0 – 0.66, Moderate= 0.67 – 1.33, High= 1.34 – 2

**Table (10): Assessment the Level of Emotional Expression among Parents (N=300)**

No	Emotional Expression	Mean	SD	Assess.
1	Being too tired for sex.	.61	.489	Moderate
2	Not showing love.	.64	.482	Moderate

No: Number, SD: Standard Deviation, Assess: Assessment  
 Low= 0-0.33, Moderate= 0.34-0.67, High= 0.68-1

**Table (11): Independent Sample Test for Marital Adjustment with regard to Parenthood (N=300)**

Parenthood		M	SD	t	df	p≤ 0.05	Sig
Marital Agreement	Mother	27.89	7.823	-2.534	298	.012	S
	Father	30.24	7.038				
Marital Satisfaction	Mother	17.15	1.858	-.661	298	.509	N.S
	Father	17.30	2.028				
Marital Cohesion	Mother	15.01	4.761	-1.136	298	.257	N.S
	Father	15.72	5.821				
Emotional Expression	Mother	1.17	.749	-2.682	298	.008	S
	Father	1.41	.740				

df: Degree of freedom, t: T-test, M: Mean, SD: Standard deviation, Sig stands for significance, p for probability, Not significantly, significantly, and highly significantly

**Table (12): Association among Marital Adjustment with Parents' Socio-demographic Characteristics (N=300)**

Variables	Marital Adjustment			Correlation
	N	Mean	SD	
Age	13 – 18 year	31	52.84	r = .266 P-value= .001 Sig= H.S
	19 – 24 year	123	62.07	
	25 – 30 year	106	63.37	
	31 – 36 year	36	68.42	
	37 ≤ year	4	63.75	
	<b>Total</b>	300	62.36	
Parenthood	Mother	200	61.21	r = .124 P-value= .032 Sig= S
	Father	100	64.67	
	<b>Total</b>	300	62.36	
Age at marriage	12 – 17 year	33	52.91	r = .271 P-value= .001 Sig= H.S
	18 – 23 year	128	62.27	
	24 – 29 year	101	63.20	
	30 – 35 year	34	69.21	
	36 ≤ year	4	63.75	
	<b>Total</b>	300	62.36	
Husband/Wife age at marriage	13 – 18 year	27	55.04	r = .190 P-value= .001 Sig= H.S
	19 – 23 year	71	61.24	
	24 – 28 year	123	63.87	
	29 – 33 year	57	60.77	
	34 – 38 year	16	69.25	
	39 ≤ year	6	74.33	

	<b>Total</b>	300	62.36	11.877	
<b>Mother's level of education</b>	Not read & write	10	59.50	13.705	<b>r = .417</b> <b>P-value= .001</b> <b>Sig= H.S</b>
	Read & write	39	53.41	9.147	
	Primary school	24	53.46	9.668	
	Middle school	38	56.50	9.574	
	Secondary school	45	66.89	11.338	
	Diploma	42	65.64	10.959	
	Bachelor	99	67.20	10.614	
	Postgraduate	3	60.00	3.464	
	<b>Total</b>	300	62.36	11.877	
<b>Father's level of education</b>	Not read & write	16	45.69	7.125	<b>r = .441</b> <b>P-value= .001</b> <b>Sig= H.S</b>
	Read & write	30	57.33	10.787	
	Primary school	41	57.56	10.322	
	Middle school	60	62.80	10.224	
	Secondary school	31	63.03	9.464	
	Diploma	39	62.72	13.332	
	Bachelor	77	68.84	10.413	
	Postgraduate	6	71.33	2.582	
	<b>Total</b>	300	62.36	11.877	

**r = Spearman correlation coefficient, P= Probability, Sig= Significance, N.S= Not significant, S= Significant, H.S= High significant**

### Discussion

From (1) the results of the study indicate that the greatest proportion(41% ) of parents are at age group (19-24) years old . This result agrees with the findings of (9) they found that (40%) of the participants' ranged from 20 to more than 35 years old.

The study's findings suggest that (42.7% ) of parents with in (18-23) years old . This result agrees with the findings of the Iraqi Central Statistical Organization for the year 2020, it stated that the average age at marriage for males 20-24 and for females 20-21.(CSO,2020).

According to levels of education the result shows that both mothers and fathers are having bachelor degree with percentage of ( 33%) and (25.7%) respectively. This result supported by the findings of (14) they found that (56.6%) of mothers are bachelor degree.

Table (3) The results indicate that (42.7%) of parents show moderate marital agreement. The results are consistent with (9) where it was found that (53%) of parents have a moderate marriage agreement, that is, not good or excellent and at the same time not bad.

Table (5) The current study indicates that marital satisfaction is moderately by more than three quarters of the sample about (81.7%) of parents during the transition to parenthood. This outcome is consistent (1) study who found that more than (54% ) have moderate marital Satisfaction during first parenthood.

Table (7) The results show that (58.3% )of parents show moderate marital cohesion, which is more than half of the sample. This study corresponds to the study (1) who found that more than 60% have moderate marital cohesion.

Table (9) According to these findings, (43.7%) of parents express their emotions strongly. A study (13) supports the research study by concluding that couples transitioning to first parenting exhibit positive emotional expression in a percentage higher than the average of the study sample, or in more than 50% of cases

Table (11) This results shows that there are high significant differences in stress, anxiety, and depression with regard to mothers at p-value= .001 respectively. This means, then, that there are large individual gender-dependent differences in the psychological state between fathers and mothers, and how they are affected psychologically after childbirth. (12) The findings of this study closely resemble those of the current study, which found that mothers are affected by psychological state more than fathers, although there was an influence for fathers as well, but less.

Table (12) This results shows the association among maritaladjustment and parents' socio-demographic variables; the findings indicate significant relationships among maritaladjustment with (age, parenthood, age at marriage, husband/wife age at marriage, mother's and father's educational backgrounds, as well as their respective occupations ,residency, monthly income and family type) . Because it found statistical differences between parental socio-demographic traits and maritaladjustment, the research of (2) is almost comparable to the current study.

### Conclusions

- Females made up the bulk of the research sample, and their age group between (19-24) year's old, age at marriage (18-23), Husband/Wife age at marriage (24-28) , bachelor degree , Unemployed housewife for mother and governmental employee among fathers.
- Marital Agreement among parents it was moderate level.
- Marital Satisfaction among parents it was moderate level.
- Marital Cohesion among Parents it was moderate level.
- Emotional Expression of Adjustment among Parents it was high level.
- Significant difference in marital agreement with regard to fathers at p-value= .012 and there is significant difference in emotional expression with regard to fathers It means that fathers are more than mothers in marital adjustment during the first parenthood.
- Significant relationships among maritaladjustment with most parents' socio-demographic characteristics.

### Recommendations

The major responsibility lies with the Primary health care centersustain fallow-up of health personal in all women's consulting clinics, it is to give the psychological aspect great importance during pregnancy for pregnant women, by referring them to a psychological consultant if they suffer from any psychological disorders that are likely to develop into more severe postpartum conditions. Distribution of prepared educational materials about effect of psychological status on marital adjustment concerning first parenthood to all new clients in all women ,s consulting clinics. The major responsibility lies with the primary health care center, where there must be a specialized nurse to provide counseling to parents and be part of a program before pregnancy, during pregnancyand postpartum.

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