

Neuroendocrine markers of grief

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Researchers have examined what's currently known about the neuroendocrine effects of grief and whether biological factors can predict complicated or prolonged grief after the death of a loved one. The findings appear in the *Journal of Neuroendocrinology*.

The review of the 20 published studies that were deemed relevant found that most studies reported on levels of the stress hormone cortisol, finding higher blood urine, or saliva levels associated with bereavement. While most published studies on the topic were of fair statistical quality only, many found that [cortisol levels](#) were altered in bereaved individuals, with possible consequences for health.

The authors called for additional studies encompassing more potential markers of neuroendocrine activity associated with grief. Such efforts may point to new treatment strategies related to psychological and physical adaptations to loss.

"Anticipatory grief and grief after social loss are fundamental stressors and can have long-term health implications for those who lose a loved one. Identifying neuroendocrine factors that are associated with [grief](#) might help tailor interventions for the bereaved and help them cope with loss." said senior author Beate Ditzen, Ph.D., of Heidelberg University Hospital, in Germany.

More information: Dora Hopf et al, Neuroendocrine mechanisms of grief and bereavement: A systematic review and implications for future interventions, *Journal of Neuroendocrinology* (2020). [DOI: 10.1111/jne.12887](#)

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