

Losing a parent during childhood may contribute to separation anxiety and anxious attachment in women

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Women who lost a parent early in life may be more likely to experience separation anxiety with romantic partners during adulthood, according to

a study published in *Stress and Health*. In addition to feeling distressed when separated from their partners, these women may also experience anxious attachment, or worry that significant others will not be available at times of need.

The study included 60 women who lost one or both parents in their youth and 60 who had living parents. Based on participants' answers to questionnaires, women who lost a parent reported higher levels of anxious attachment and adult separation anxiety from a partner. The groups did not differ, however, in terms of avoidant attachment, or the desire to maintain autonomy and emotional distance from their [parents](#) during childhood and from their partners during [adulthood](#).

In women who lost a parent, adult separation anxiety and anxious attachment peaked in the initial 5 years of romantic relationships and gradually declined after a decade.

"A future study is suggested to delve into how the duration of a romantic relationship impacts separation anxiety and anxious attachment among women who have experienced early parental loss in [childhood](#)," said corresponding author Ora Peleg, Ph.D., of the Max Stern Yezreel Valley College and the Academic College Emek Yezreel, in Israel.

More information: How is the loss of a parent in youth related to attachment and adult separation anxiety among women?, *Stress and Health* (2023). [DOI: 10.1002/smi.3356](https://doi.org/10.1002/smi.3356)

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