

Unil

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## **Partner support during pregnancy after Assisted Reproductive Technology**

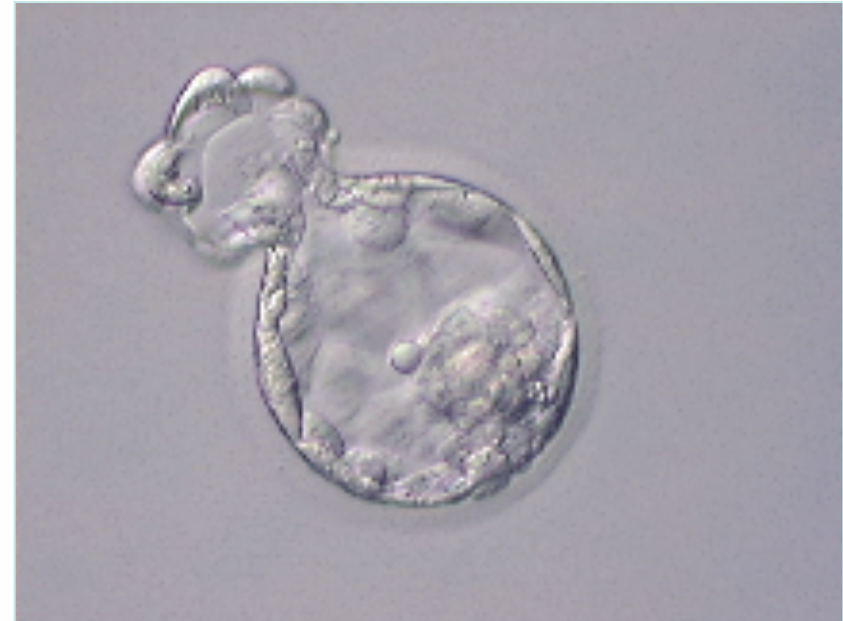
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# Background (1)

## Pregnancy via Assisted Reproductive Technology (ART)

- struggle to conceive: medical tests and treatments
- repercussions of infertility and its treatment: self-esteem, stress, depression, social status, loss of control
- paradoxical situation: treatment can get around infertility but not cure it

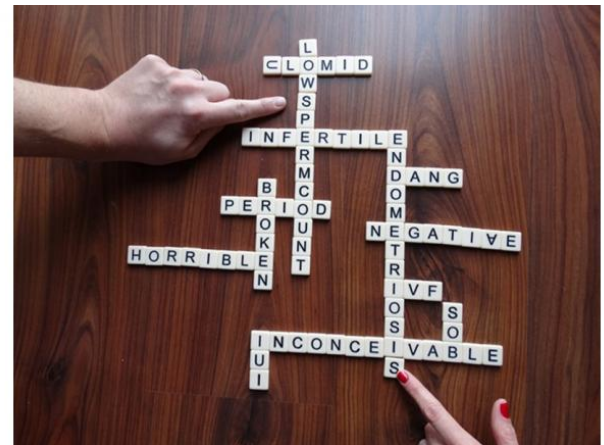


LBR-CPMA, Lausanne

## Background (2)

### Pregnancy via Assisted Reproductive Technology (ART)

- more obstetrical complications
- more anxiety about losing the pregnancy and about the health and survival of the future baby
- no difference for depression, higher attachment to the fetus
  - ➔ more complex experience of pregnancy



# Background (3)

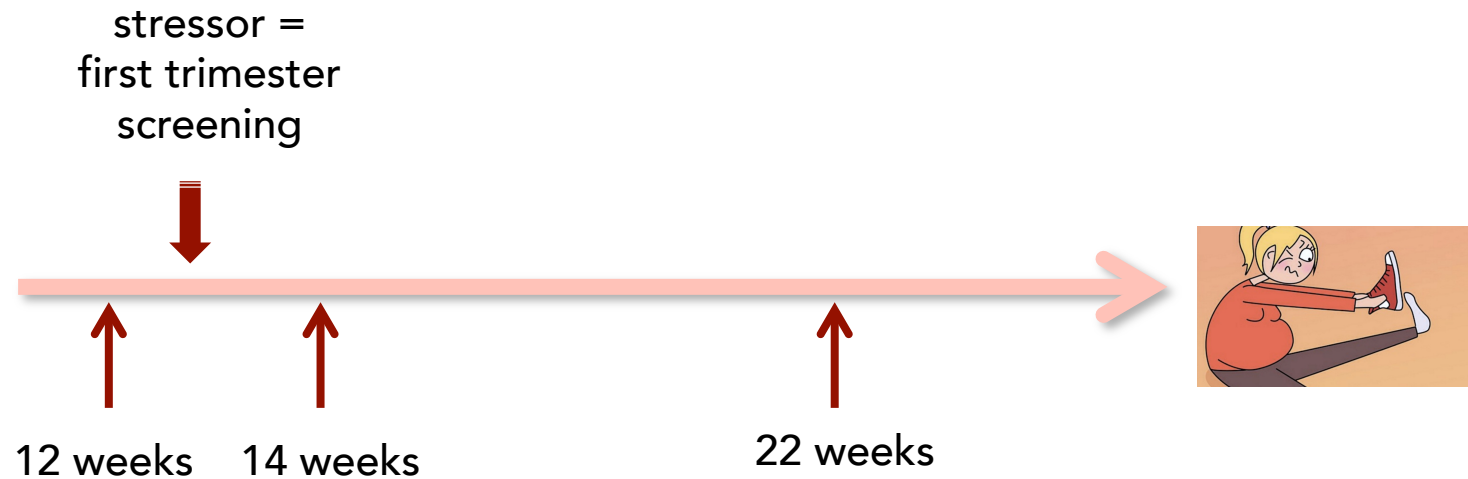
## Prenatal screening

- potentially stress-inducing situation
- after infertility: anxiety may be higher
- partner support
  - during infertility: reduces infertility-related stress
  - after spontaneous pregnancy: lowers maternal and infant distress and is a protective factor for postpartum outcomes



# Objective

1. Mutual support when facing a stressor
2. Impact on anxiety and depression levels



# Research questions

1. Partner support
  - ↗ Couples with Assisted Reproductive Technology (ART)
  - ↘ Couples with Spontaneous Conception (SC)
2. Receiving support = buffer against anxiety and depression?



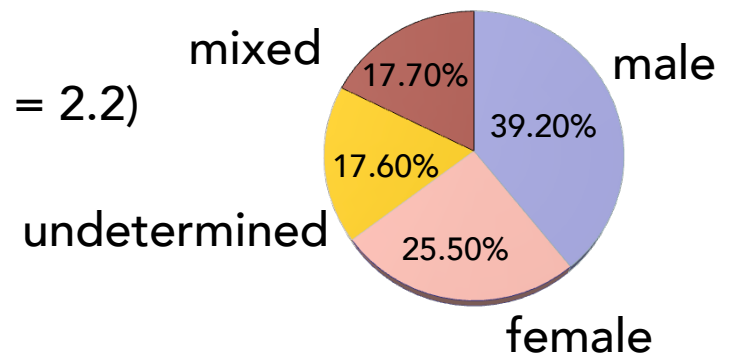


# Population

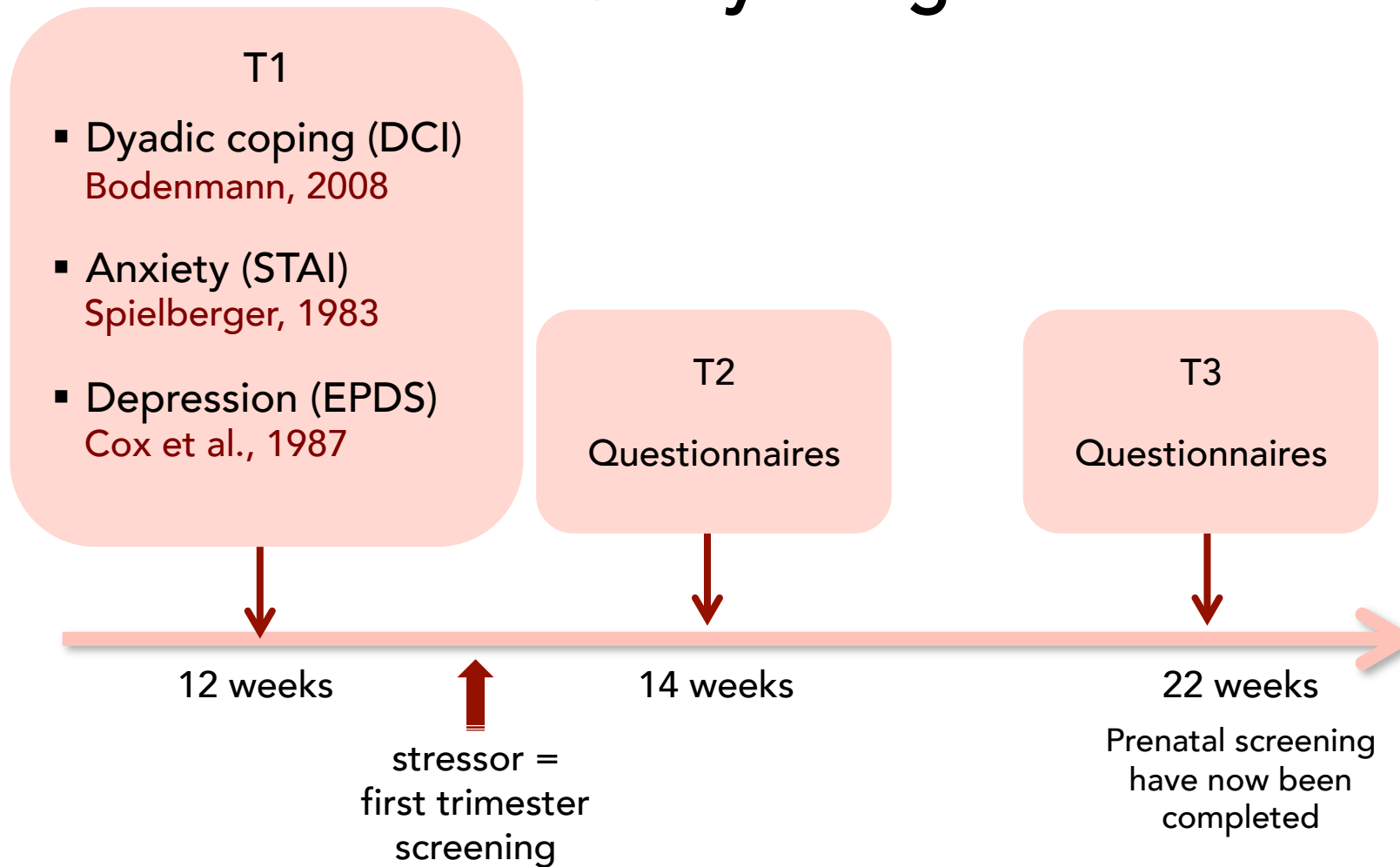


- Sample: 103 couples
  - ↗ 52 ART
  - ↘ 51 SC
- Age:
  - ART partners (31-42)
  - SC partners (28-37)
- Years of cohabitation: ART (4-6) and SC (1-5)
- Marriage: ART (78.5%) and SC (42.3%)
- Years of infertility treatments:  $M = 2.9$  ( $SD = 2.2$ )

Source of infertility



# Study design





# Partner support

## Dyadic Coping Inventory

Subscale 1: Perceived support provided to the other partner

What I do when my partner is stressed?

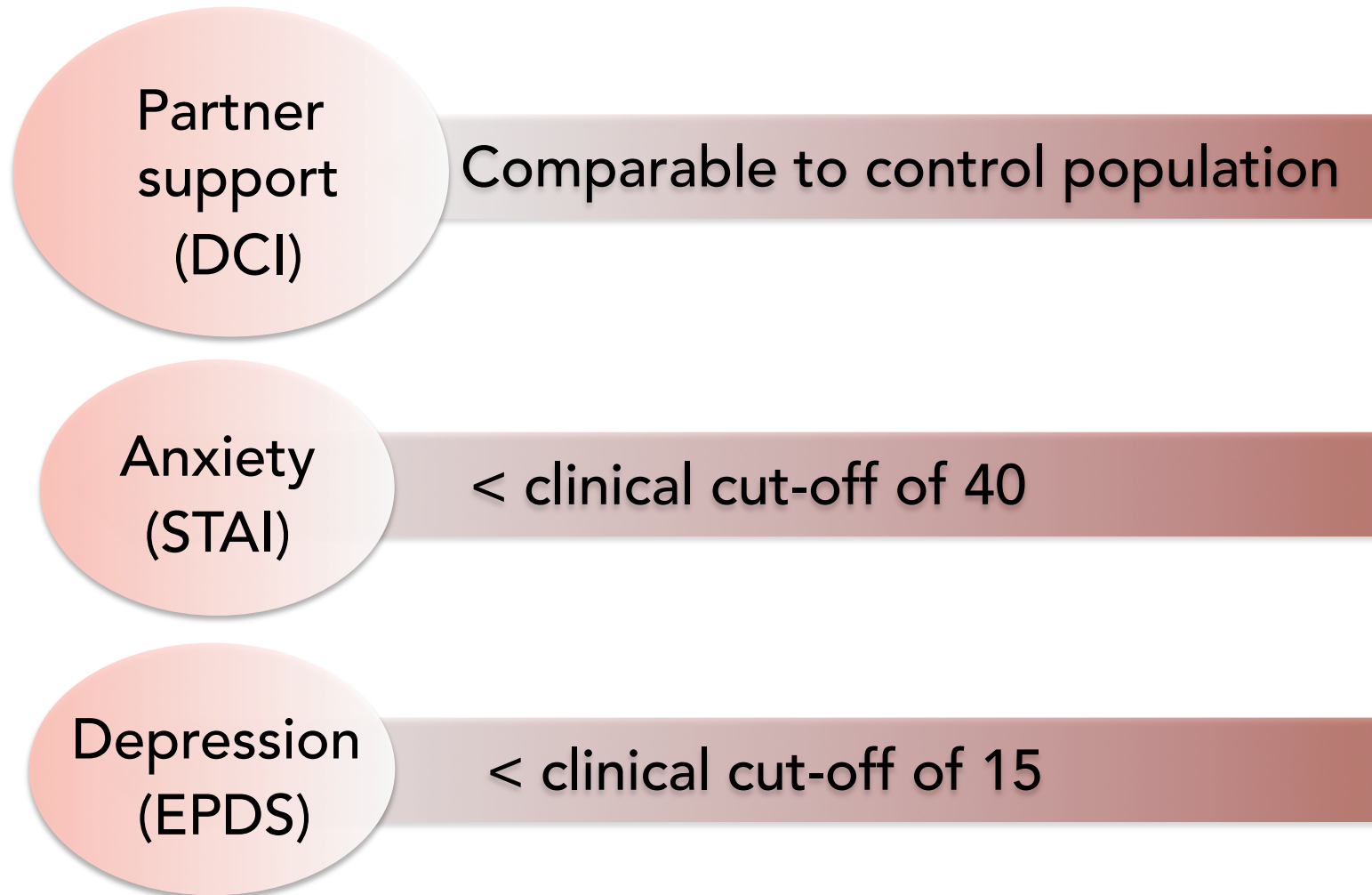
➔ *I show empathy and understanding.*

Subscale 2: Perceived support received from the other partner

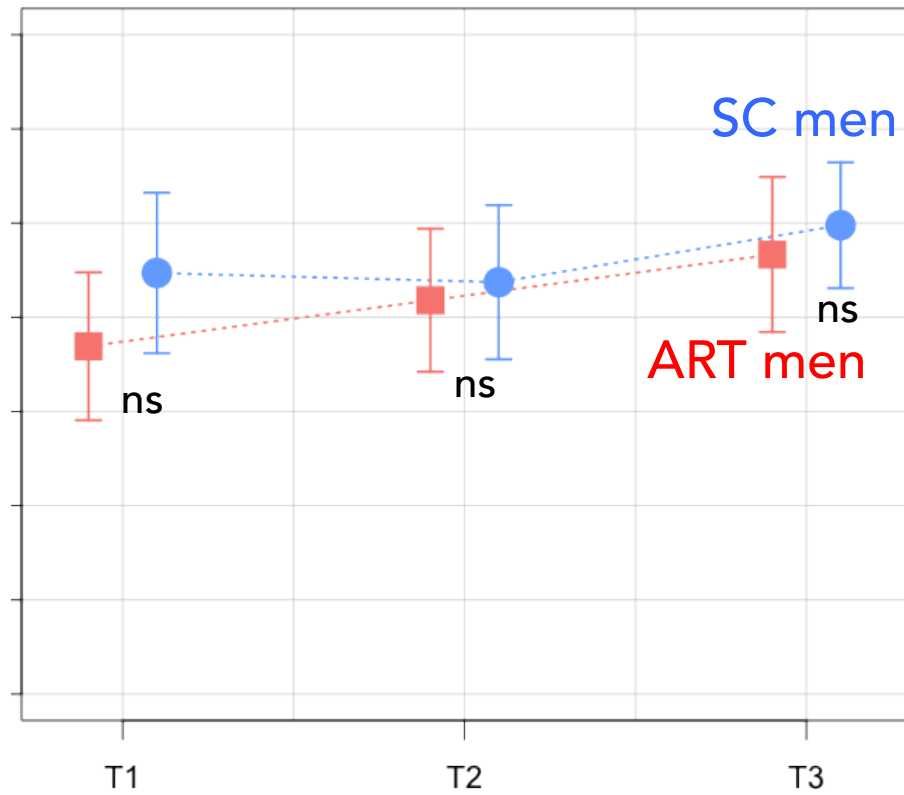
What does my partner do when I am stressed?

➔ *My partner shows empathy and understanding.*

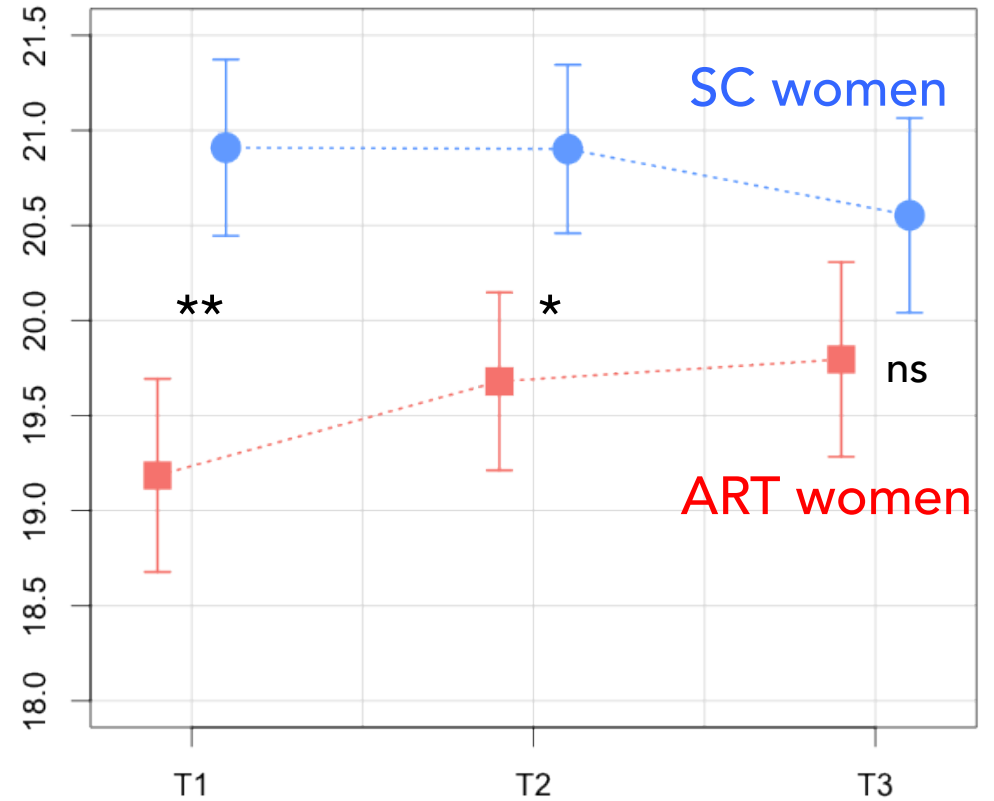
# Mean scores



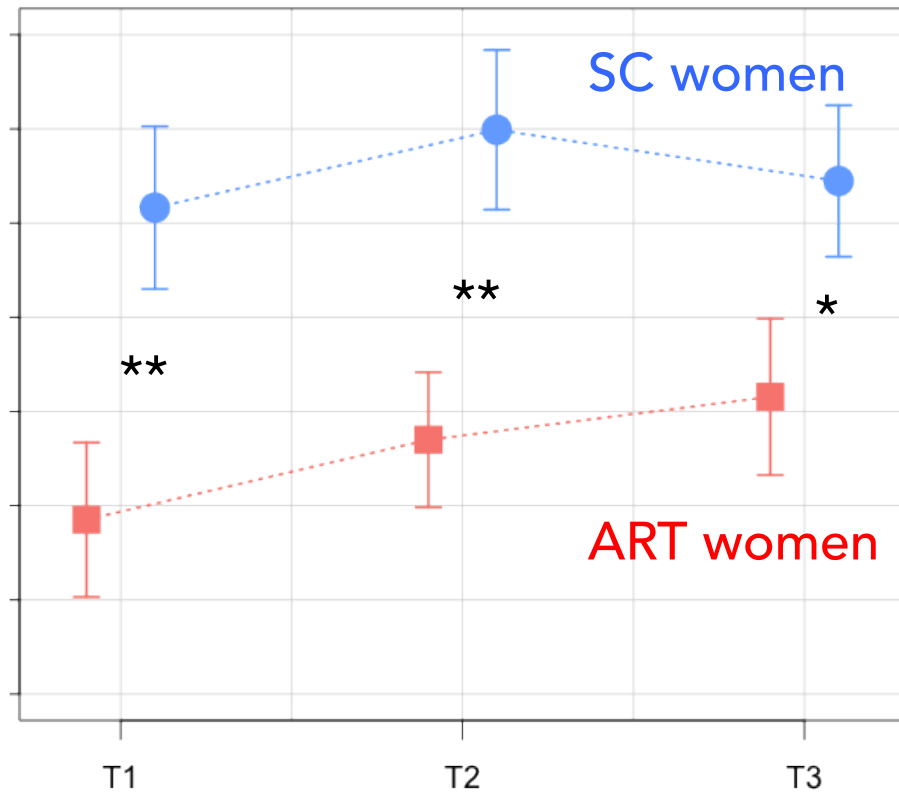
## Support provided by men



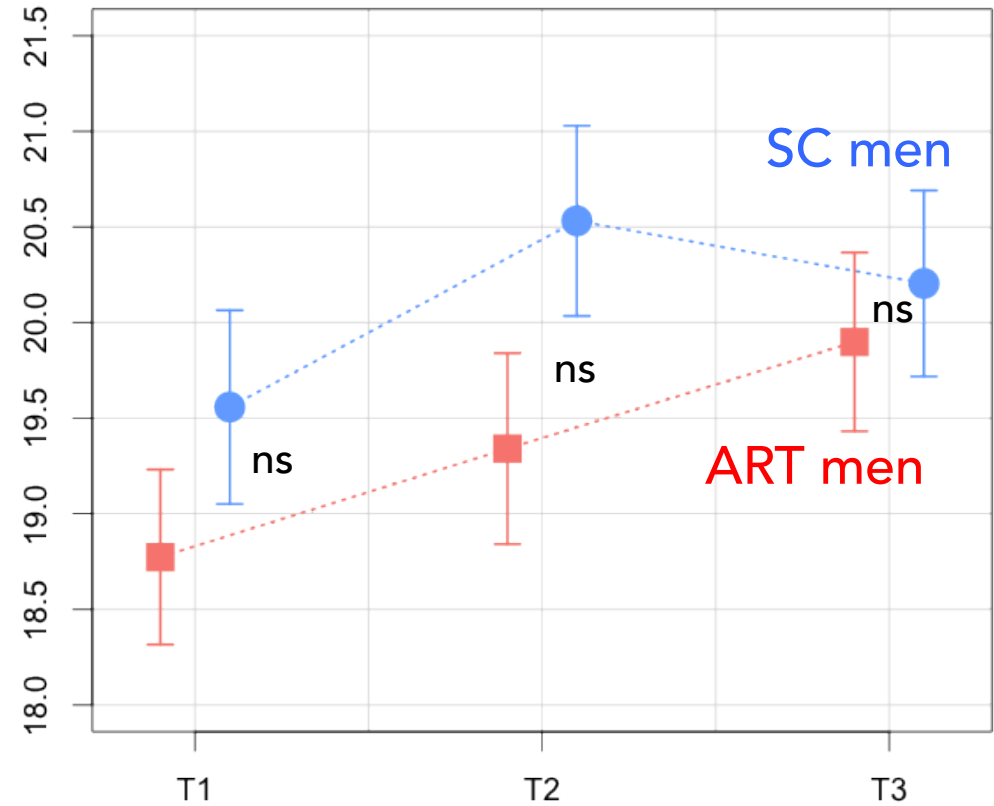
## Support received by women



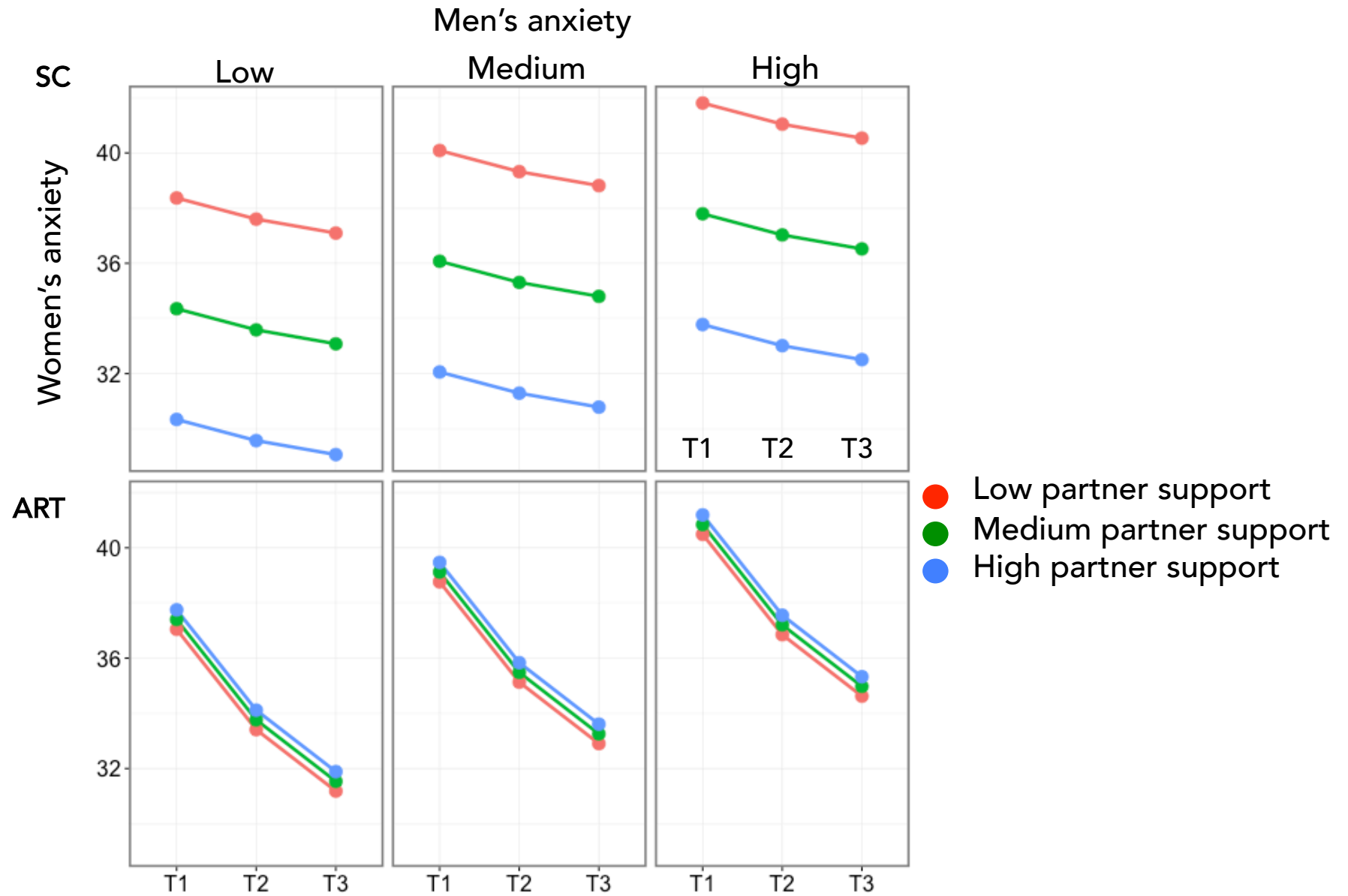
## Support provided by women



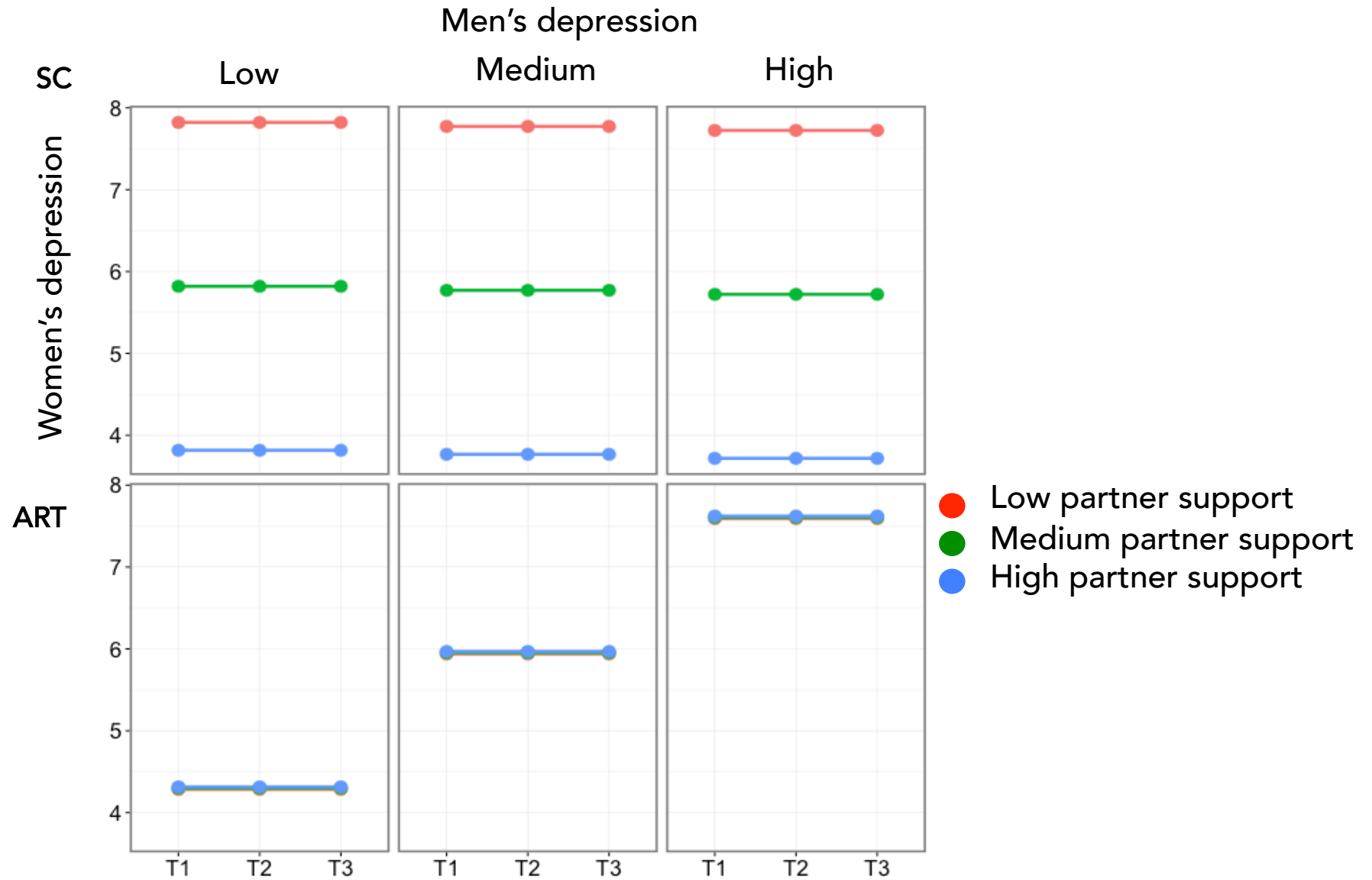
## Support received by men



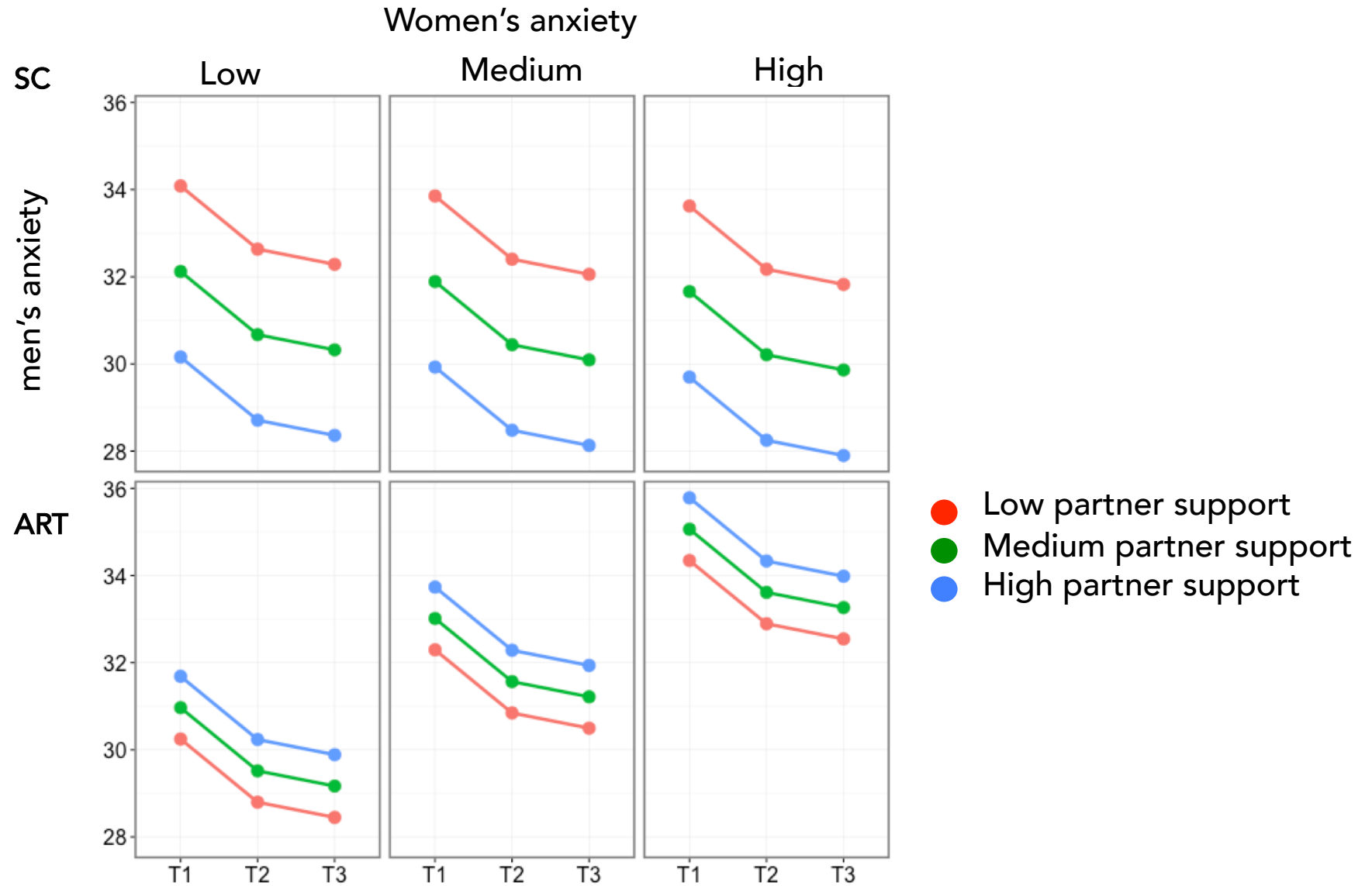
## Women's perception of received support: effect on their anxiety



# Women's perception of received support: effect on their depression

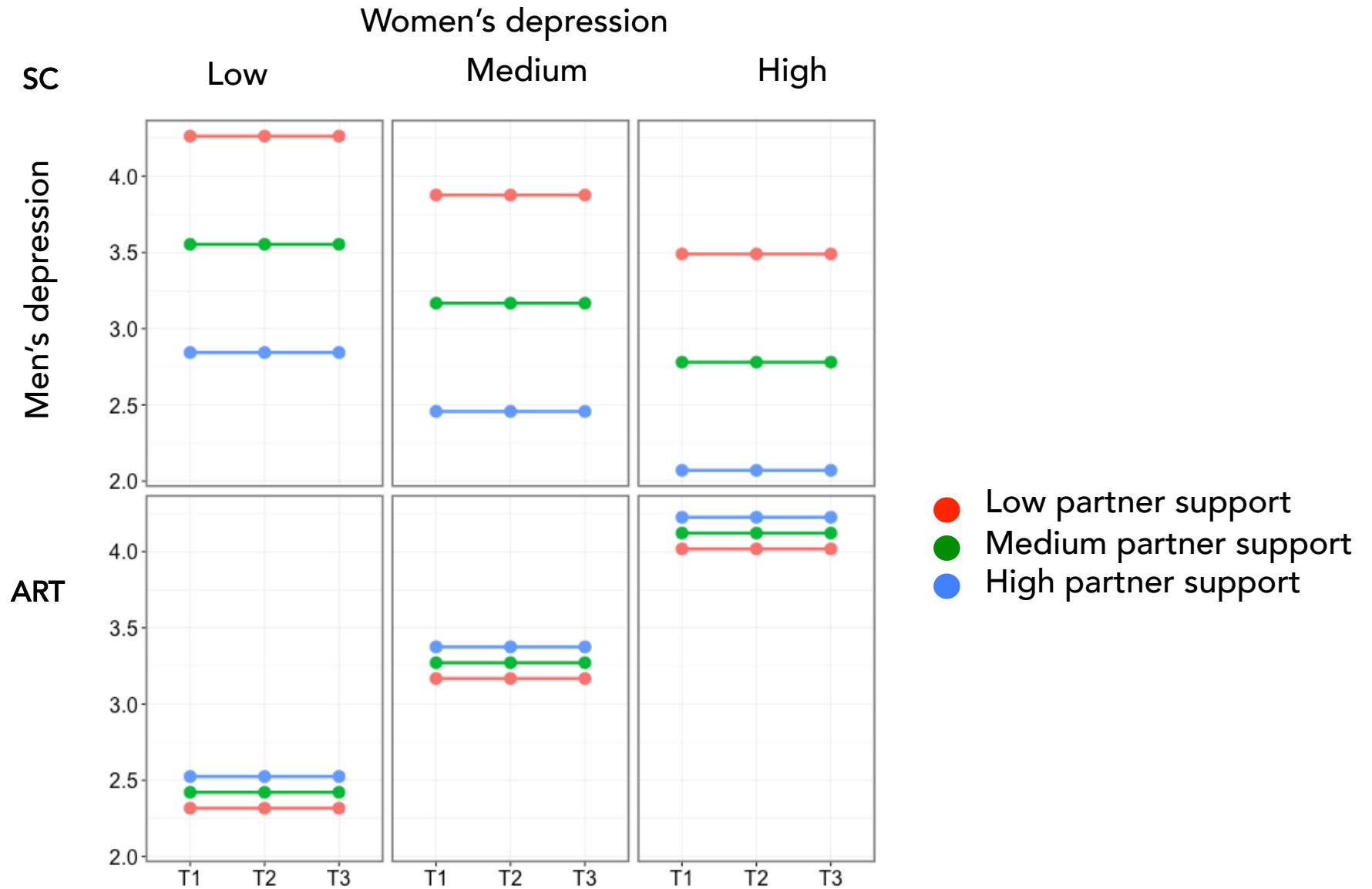


# Men's perception of received support: effect on their anxiety





# Men's perception of received support: effect on their depression



# Summary and conclusions

- ART women: they provide and receive less support
  - their resources are depleted
  - support from their partner might be insufficient or not in line with their expectations
- ART couples: support received does not act as a buffer against prenatal anxiety and depression
- Anxiety levels decrease over the course of the pregnancy



**Thank you for you attention!**

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