Original Article

Health and Psychological Determinants of Uncontested Divorce in the City of Kermanshah

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Abstract

Background: Because of the increasing trend of uncontested divorce in the courts, as two out of every three divorces are related to uncontested divorce, scrutinizing the health and psychological causes of the rate of uncontested divorce is of great importance. The aim of this study was to examine the psychological and health factors affecting uncontested divorce

Methods: The present study was a cross-sectional data secondary analysis in which the existing data were analyzed. After obtaining official permission from the family courts in the city of Kermanshah, the data related to the issue of uncontested divorce during 2017 and 2019 were received and analyzed. The sampling method in this study was a census in which all legal cases of applicants for uncontested divorce in city of Kermanshah in the years of 2017-2018 have been reviewed.

Results: 2842 cases referred to welfare organization for consultation, of which, 2331 cases led to uncontested divorce and 511 cases not led to uncontested divorce (compromise). Among the psychological factors, the variables of suspicion, pessimism and depression; and among health variables, the variable of sexual satisfaction had a statistically significant relationship with uncontested divorce and anxiety, aggression and infertility did not have a statistically significant relationship.

Conclusion: Considering the role of suspicion and pessimism, depression and sexual dissatisfaction in uncontested divorce, it was recommended that specific preventive strategies should be considered by the authorities. These strategies can provide both education and counseling in pre-marital and post-marital periods, as well as during the uncontested divorce process.

Introduction

Divorce is one of the social problems that has been very common in today's societies, the rate of this phenomenon increased rapidly in the 1960s and 1970s in world (1-3). The rate of divorce in industrialized countries is increasing significantly (4, 5). According to the statistics of the National Organization for Civil Registration, the divorce rate has increased by more than 16% from 2006 to 2013 (2) and in the first quarter of 2020, it has expanded by 18% (6). The social developments of recent decades at the global level have confronted the family system with new changes, challenges, issues and needs, and have exposed it with lots of threats. When family functions like biological, social, cognitive and emotional ones are damaged one after another, its members gradually lose their sense of satisfaction.

The gradual decrease in the satisfaction of family members, first leads to a psychological rupture, then a social rupture, and lastly it gets the legal form, which is called divorce (7). Divorce is a global phenomenon that has been scrutinized by many researchers and organizations (8). Divorce causes many social and economic problems for individuals and society, and is one of the most severe stressors that endanger the mental and physical health (9). If bitter feelings, and psychological problems which are made at the process of divorce and after it, are not taken into account, they can become the main psychiatric problems in these people (10).

Sociologists, psychologists, and jurists each have scrutinized the issue of divorce in different ways. Some have dealt with the causes and factors of divorce and through this, they have tried to identify the causes and ways to overcome it, and to take a step towards solving this problem. Also, many studies have sought to find out the factors affecting on divorce. Considering the socio-cultural context, various factors have been mentioned for the occurrence of divorce.

It has been mentioned the infidelity of spouses as one of the causes of divorce (11). By a comparative study of 66 countries, Sabini indicated that in a society, the more women were related to men, the higher was the divorce rate. In (12) mentioned individual factors (age, education, socioeconomic status), communicational factors (previous psychological and emotional functions or degree of attachment to ex-spouse) and psychological factors (self-esteem, individual coping skills, individual attitudes and beliefs) as the effective factors in making an end to marriage and the occurrence of divorce. Meanwhile, according to the socio-cultural context of Iran, consider premarital factors such as marriage with inappropriate motives and compulsory marriage and post-marital factors including the conflict with the spouse's family, low presence of husband at home and continuing the associations that they have at the time when they were single, the conflict over their attitudes on gender role, marital violence, infidelity, suspicion, and financial problems, as effective factors in the occurrence of divorce (13). Studies done on uncontested divorces, such as (14) disclosed the interference of others, employment status, having a history of divorce, type of marriage, duration of cohabitation, age at the time of marriage, suspicion and pessimism, anger and infertility have a significant effect on uncontested divorce between couples, but housing status, number of children, depression and sexual satisfaction do not have a significant effect on the uncontested divorce between couples (15). In (16), stated that the traditional and modern structure in the current Iranian society, unfinished-individualism, increasing women's awareness and their employment, changing attitudes of the society towards marriage, imperfect sociability, and the
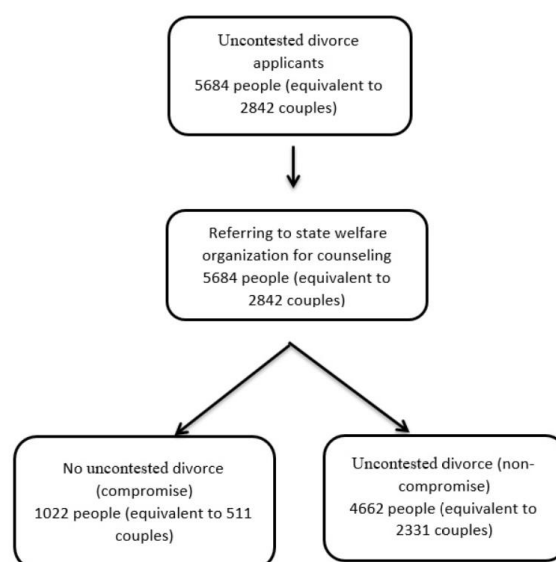
reduction of social control were among the factors increasing uncontested divorce in the society, and this phenomenon is more common among the middle-class people.

In recent years, the growth rate of divorce has been increasing in Iran. According to the statistics of the National Organization for Civil Registration, the number of marriages and divorces until the end of the year 2015 was 685352 and 163765; respectively (17, 18). The state of divorce is not the same everywhere in the country and it changes under the influence of socio-cultural factors in various regions of the country.

In recent years, the growth of divorce in Kermanshah has been significant. This shows a different situation comparing to the whole country (19). In the first three months of 2020, the city of Kermanshah was among the three cities with the highest divorce rate, and more than 40% of these divorces were uncontested, which had a 10% increase in the divorce rate compared to the previous years. As it is clear, the number of divorces in general, and uncontested divorces in particular, has increased significantly and seriously; and in the meantime, the low quality of relationships in the field of mental health and the formation of negative mental health criteria based on the spread of depression, indifference and communicational isolation have been increasing, and this form of relationship damages couples, and creates a serious problem in the relationship for the person. Therefore, and due to the lack of research on the causes of uncontested divorce and also due to the increasing trend of uncontested divorce in today's courts as two out of three divorces are related to uncontested divorce (20), the purpose of this paper was examining the psychological and health factors affecting uncontested divorce in the city of Kermanshah.

Methodology

The current study was a cross-sectional data secondary analysis in which the existing data related to the uncontested divorce were secondary analyzed. To this end, after gaining official permission from the family courts of Kermanshah, the data related to the uncontested divorce during 2017 and 2018 were obtained, prepared, cleaned and then analyzed through using appropriate statistical tests. The statistical population of this study was all applicants for uncontested divorce in family courts in Kermanshah during 2017 and 2018 who were referred to the State Welfare Organization (SWO) for counseling. Sampling in this study was done by census. Thus, all legal cases of couples applying for uncontested divorce during the years 2017 and 2018 in Kermanshah (2842 cases) were reviewed. In total, 2842 couples were referred to the SWO for counseling, of which 2331 couples led to uncontested divorce (non-compromise) and 511 couples not led to uncontested divorce (compromise) (Figure 1).

Figure 1. Applicants for uncontested divorce in Kermanshah in 2017 and 2018

Data on psychological and health factors have been asked from uncontested divorce applicants in a self-declared manner and recorded in their legal file. Therefore, in order to collect the required data in this study, the required data were extracted

from the legal files of divorce applicants by referring to the document and information centers of the General Directorate of Justice and the SWO of Kermanshah. Psychological factors in this study referred to factors related to mental health that are very significant in the quality of couples' relationships, including depression, anxiety, etc., which were mainly referred to as causal variables or variables that were the result of marital incompatibility, and health variables refer to concepts related to the quality of sex and fertility. These data were based on the availability of the applicant's files as well as the availability of individual reports. Accordingly, independent variables including a) psychological factors: 1) suspicion and pessimism 2) anxiety disorder 3) aggression 4) depression b) health factors: 1) sexual satisfaction 2) infertility.

Uncontested divorce was considered as a binary outcome variable. In order to select the variables for entering into the final model, the relationship between each of the independent variables with uncontested divorce was first tested through using univariate logistic regression. Then, due to the significance level less than 0.1 (21), non-significant variables were removed, and finally the remaining variables were entered into the multiple logistic regression model. In this study, in order to find out the fitness of the model, Pearson's goodness of fit test was used, and to show the predictive power of the model, the Pseudo-determination coefficient was calculated. The collected data were analyzed through using STATA 14 software.

Ethical considerations for conducting this study included conducting surveys in a confidential manner and without stating the demographic characteristics of the subjects. Also, this study received the required ethics approval from Research Ethics Committee of Isfahan University of Medical Sciences with ethical code No: IR.MUI.RESEARCH.REC.1397.049.

Results

We examined the psychological and health factors affecting uncontested divorce. 2842 cases referred to welfare organization for consultation, of which, 2331 cases led to uncontested divorce and 511 cases led to non-uncontested divorce (compromise). At first, a descriptive report of the research findings is presented. In this section, the group of people who got uncontested divorced were studied in terms of marital satisfaction, depression, anxiety, aggression, fertility problems, etc., which has been reported in (Table 1). The results of univariate logistic regression between uncontested divorce and the examined variables have been shown in (Table 2). Considering the significance level less than 0.1 for entering variables into the multiple regression model, the variables of the couple age at the time of marriage (P-value =0.404), number of children (P-value =0.836), and marital status of couples (P-value =0.525) were removed.

The results of multiple logistic regression between uncontested divorce with the studied variables have been shown in (Table 3). According to the results of Pseudo coefficient (0.26), it can be stated that the variables studied in the logistic regression model explain 26% of the variance of the uncontested divorce. Also, the significance of Pearson's goodness of fit test (P-value ≤0.05) indicates that the model has a good fit. In general, among the psychological factors, the variables of suspicion, pessimism and depression; and among health variables, the variable of sexual satisfaction had a statistically significant relationship with uncontested divorce and anxiety, aggression and infertility did not have a statistically significant relationship. The results of the variable of suspicion and pessimism display that the relationship between suspicion and pessimism and uncontested divorce is statistically significant and direct (P-value <0.05). Also, according to the results related to the odds ratio of suspicion

and pessimism, it can be said that the probability of uncontested divorce in people with suspicion and people. In other words, people with pessimism are 14.7% higher than other suspicion and pessimism are more likely to apply for uncontested divorce than others. The results of odds ratio of depression indicate that the relationship between depression and uncontested divorce is statistically significant and direct (P-value <0.05). Also, according to the results of the odds ratio, it

Table 1. Descriptive statistics of participants

Variable	Situations		Frequency	Percentage
Marital Satisfaction	Men	is satisfied	1534	65.19
		is not satisfied	819	34.81
	Women	is satisfied	1428	60.69
		is not satisfied	925	39.31
Amount of time Living together	Less than 1 year		265	11.26
	Between 1 to 3 years		349	14.83
	Between 3 to 5 years		560	23.80
	More than 5 years		1179	50.11
Number of children	Without children		1007	42.80
	1 child		632	26.86
	2 children		499	21.21
	3 children		215	9.13
Infertility of individuals	Men	yes	6	0.25
		no	2347	99.75
	Women	yes	27	1.15
		no	2326	98.85
Interference of people around	Relatives interfered.		397	16.87
	Relatives did not interfere.		1956	83.13
Individuals' pessimism	pessimist		268	11.39
	no pessimist		2085	88.61
Individuals' depression	yes		414	17.59
	no		1939	82.41
Individuals' anxiety	yes		289	12.28
	no		2.64	87.72
Individuals' Aggression	yes		398	16.91
	no		1955	83.09

Table 2. Univariate logistic regression between uncontested divorce and psychological and health variables

Variable	Sig.	Odds ratio	Coefficient	95% confidence interval
Suspicion and pessimism	0.088	1.023	0.023	-0.283~0.329
Age at the time of marriage	0.404	0915	-0.089	0.742~1.128
Anxiety disorder status	0.050	1.101	0.096	0.184~0.376
Depression	0.000	0.066	-2.714	-2.008~-3.420
Number of children	0.836	1.01	0.010	-0.802~0.101
Aggression	0.031	1.143	0.134	0.128~0.395
Infertility	0.098	0.935	-0.067	-0.406~0.272
Marital status of couples	0.525	0.898	-0.108	-0.441~0.225
Sexual satisfaction	0.073	0.965	-0.035	-0.235~0.164

can be claimed that the chance of uncontested divorce occurring in people with depression are 26.6% higher than other people. In other words, people with depression are more likely to apply for uncontested divorce comparing with the others.

The results related to the odds ratio of the variable of sexual satisfaction indicate that the relationship between sexual satisfaction and uncontested divorce is statistically significant and inverse (P-value <0.05). Also, according to the results related to the odds ratio, the chance of uncontested divorce in people with sexual satisfaction could be 6.3% lower than other people. In other words, the chances of uncontested divorce are lower in people with sexual satisfaction than in people without sexual satisfaction.

Table 3. Multiple logistic regression between uncontested divorce and psychological and health variables

Variable	Sig.	Odds ratio	Coefficient	95% confidence interval
Suspicion and pessimism	0.032	1.147	0.341	1.053~1.417
Anxiety disorder status	0.607	1.078	0.075	0.809~1.438
Depression	0.000	1.266	0.719	1.033~1.834
Aggression	0.279	1.159	0.148	0.887~1.517
Infertility	0.756	0.946	-0.055	0.668~1.339
Sexual satisfaction	0.046	0.937	-0.065	0.176~0.994

Discussion

The results of this study were to scrutinized the relationship of some psychological and health variables on the uncontested divorce in detail, which indicated that people with suspicion and pessimism are more likely than other people to get uncontested divorce. Suspicion is one of the cases that leads to a couple applying for uncontested divorce and plays a main role in the lack of trust and common sense in couples (21).

When there is pessimism between the couple, mistrust is created, and when the wife and husband do not trust each other, their interest in continuing to live with each other decreases, and this leads to uncontested divorce. This result is in line with the results obtained from the studies done by (22-24), that considered the existence of pessimism as an obsessive factor in reducing the quality of life. In explaining this research finding, it can be claimed that the root of pessimism goes back to the bad feeling, and when such a feeling is created, the person has no desire to continue and create a feeling of intimacy in the relationship, which results in trying to stay away, separate and divorce.

Another result of this research was that, people with depression are more likely to get uncontested divorce comparing to other people. These psychological symptoms are clearly in a direct relationship with each other, in other words, the existence of depression of couples leads to frustration and isolation, which in the long run, causes depression and keeping distance in each party (25). A coping approach in this area prevents the relationship from cooling down, and interventional treatment can be effective for either spouse, if there is a negative psychological symptom.

By summing up the results corresponding to the health variables, it can be concluded that the occurrence of uncontested divorce is lower in people with sexual satisfaction than in people without sexual satisfaction. In this regard, sex is the highest manifestation of love, and has a direct relationship with marital satisfaction and mental health and the continuity of the relationship between couples. When sexual satisfaction is high in a couple, the feeling of understanding, satisfaction and peace of being together grows significantly, so the quality of sex has a direct and two-way relationship with quality of life. In this regard, sexual intercourse is not the result of a purely physical relationship, and it is romantic and love-making interactions in

this case, that increases its quality and satisfaction. If sexual intercourse is without expressing love and its signs, it quickly becomes a repetitive habit, and its quality and consequently the quality-of-life decreases. Accordingly, a satisfying sexual relationship arises from the positive feelings of the parties to each other, and improves different parts of the couple's life. In explaining this research finding, it can be stated that it is necessary to give the necessary training to the couple before marriage to create a desirable and satisfying intimate relationship. As one of the most important reasons for the increase in the number of uncontested divorces is sexual dissatisfaction in couples, couples can go to premarital counseling centers before marriage, and get the necessary information about sex and sexual satisfaction. It indicates that not paying attention to the sexual needs of the spouse maybe make the couple angry and discouraged, and gradually leads to aggressive behaviors that eventually lead to depression, infidelity and divorce.

Accordingly, it is necessary to provide serious, compulsory and special education to couples before marriage. Finally, this study tried to analyze the relationships between the research variables and uncontested divorce, but there were limitations in this regard. The most important of which are the unavailability of information and the inconsistency of research subjects in terms of psychological characteristics, interests, motivation and other characteristics which requires equivalence and similarity of research subjects for achieving generalizable results. Regarding the negative effects of various causative factors of uncontested divorce on couples including phycological and health factors, strategies for prevention and reduction of these factors should be necessary considered for prevention and early treatment of problems. These strategies could include counseling before

marriage, after marriage and during the uncontested divorce process.

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