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Der Pharmacia Lettre, 2017, 9 (4):18-21
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Divorce, A Growing Phenomenon in Iran: Especially Among the Iranian Adolescents

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ABSTRACT

The trend of divorce has been rising in recent decades and its adverse consequences are inevitable particularly for women and children. Due to the negative effects of economic and social pressures on the family strength, the trend of divorce was assessed in Ilam, Iran as a deprived area that experiences 8-year imposed war. In a cohort study all basic data, including the frequency of marriage, and divorce each year, residence, age difference between men and women, age at divorce and duration of married life were recorded through the registration centers on marriage and divorce information in Ilam, Iran from 2012 to 2016. The divorce to marriage ratio was calculated based on the number of divorces to the number of marriages each year. In total, 42363 marriages and 3425 divorces had been done with an increasing trend of divorce. The mean of divorce to marriage ratio was 8.2%. The relationship between the years and ratio of divorce was significant. Also, the difference between the ages at divorce in male and female was a significant. The trend of divorce is increasing during the past five years in Iran. The adolescent

females have not developed of the physical, mental and social maturity; therefore, they can't fitness and skill to handle married life, motherhood and other duties of women in Islamic societies.

Key words: Cohort study, Imposed war, Iranian adolescents, Trend of divorce

INTRODUCTION

Marriage is one of the most important issues during the human evolution. In fact, marriage is considered as the biggest mental investment [1]. In Islamic countries, divorce is a connected event with married and it is considered as one of the most important social phenomenon [2]. The divorce is a complex phenomenon and can not to be considered one or more factors specific as the cause of divorce. Recently, increasing the divorce disrupt order and balance in the society. In addition, divorce is a social cause other damage. Although divorce can dispel the marital conflicts, but its adverse consequences, is inevitable, particularly for women and children [3]. Although the trend of divorce has been rising in recent decades in many Asian countries [4], some divorce risk factors such as social conditions and religious beliefs are important and fundamental in any society [5]. It is obvious that the effects of a long war [6], economic and political sanctions created rapid social change in Iran during the past few decades [7]. Even it is logical that we observed the various trends in different regions of Iran basis of the variance in difficult living conditions. Generally, if we considered all critical issues such as, Ilam as a starved city in a developing country, also under war with Iraq, it seems to be necessary to evaluate the trend of divorce among couples in Ilam, Iran.

METHODS

Due to important psychological and social effects of divorce in any society, a cohort study was conducted in Ilam as a deprived area Iran for 5 years. The basic data, including the frequency of marriage and divorce each year, residence (urban or rural), age difference between men and women, age at divorce and duration of married life were recorded through the registration centers on marriage and divorce information in Ilam, Iran from 2012 to 2016.

The divorce to marriage ratio was calculated based on the number of divorces to the number of marriages each year. This study was conducted with the approval of the ethics committee of the Ilam University of Medical Sciences. To enhance confidentiality, all questionnaires were completed anonymously and only required information was collected. Data analysis was carried out with IBM SPSS for Windows ver. 20.0 (IBM Co., Armonk, NY, USA) using descriptive and inferential statistics. The χ^2 test was used to test the categorical variable. However, if the expected values for each cell of the table were less than 5, then at Fisher's test was used. A P-value was less than 0.05 was considered as significant level.

RESULTS

In total, 42363 marriages and 3425 divorces had been done in the study population during 2012-2016. The results showed an increasing trend of divorce during the past five years. The mean of divorce to marriage ratio was 8.2% in the study population. There was a significant correlation between the years and divorce to marriage ratio (Table 1).

Table-1: The divorce to marriage ratio in the Ilam, Iran population at 2012-2016.

Years	Divorce	Marriage	Ratio, %	P- value
2012	537	7459	7.2	0.001
2013	619	8365	7.4	
2014	943	10250	9.2	
2015	583	7109	8.2	
2016	743	9180	8.1	

The most frequent age of divorce was observed in 20 -30 years old. There was a significant difference between the ages at divorce in male and female. The frequencies of divorce on the based on the age at divorce are shown in Table 2.

Table-2: The frequency of divorce based on the age at divorce in the Ilam, Iran population at 2012-2016.

Age of Divorce*	Gender		Total, N (%)	P- value
	Male, N (%)	Female, N (%)		
Less than 15	0(0)	51(1.7)	51(0.9)	0.001
15-20	57(2.1)	490(16.3)	547(9.6)	
21-25	469(17.4)	868(28.9)	1337(23.5)	
26-30	940(34.9)	722(24)	1662(29.2)	
31-35	717(26.7)	505(16.8)	1222(21.5)	
36-40	273(10.1)	218(7.3)	491(8.6)	
More than 40	234(8.7)	152(5.1)	386(6.8)	
Total	2690 (100)	3006(100)	5696(100)	
*Years				

Based the results, there was a significant correlation between age at divorce and duration of marriage ($p=0.001$, $r=0.698$). So that all divorced individuals who were younger than 20 years has been the marriage duration 1-5 years.

DISCUSSION

The global changes in the family pattern and foundation have been happening during the past few decades [8]. In fact, delayed marriage and fertility, divorce, non-marital childbearing is considering changes in family foundation. However, we rarely encountered with non-marital childbearing in Iran, but also, divorce is an important social phenomenon in Iran. Due to the

negative effects of economic and social pressures on the family strength, the trend of divorce was assessed in Ilam, Iran as a deprived area that experiences 8-year imposed war.

The results of the present study showed an increasing trend of divorce during the past five years with mean divorce to marriage ratio 8.2%. Although apparently, this ratio is lower than in many developed countries [9], Asian countries [9,10] or even Iranian [9], but also, there are disturbing points on our results. The 1st point, we reported the divorce to marriage ratio. This ration is the number of divorces to the number of marriages in each year. In fact, the lower divorce to marriage ratio can reflect the decline in the marriage ratio in the study population. The 2nd point, there are number of divorces among adolescent females less than 15 years. This is even though this age group have not yet developed by the physical, mental and social maturity. So, it seems logical that the adolescent females do not have the necessary fitness and skill to handle married life, motherhood and other duties of women in Islamic societies. The 3rd point, we found that all cases of duration of married 1-5 years is reported in individuals younger than 20 years. This can reflect problems associated with early marriage, including the physical, mental, and social immaturity, lack of marital conflict resolution skills and other affecting factors of married life.

CONCLUSION

The trend of divorce is increasing during the past five years in Iran. In fact, the women physical [1,12] and mental health [13] is crucial in any society, so you should consider that the adolescent females have not developed of the physical, mental, and social maturity, therefore, they can't fitness and skill to handle married life, motherhood and other duties of women in Islamic societies.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This study was conducted with the approval of the ethics committee of the Ilam of Medical Sciences. We thank the coordinators and data collectors who assisted in this study.

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