

# Coping with Divorce in Men: A Scoping Review Protocol

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## Abstract

Divorce is one of the most major stressors in life and has potentially negative consequences for mental and physical health. So, One's ability to cope with divorce breeds in more general health. the focus of studies is more concentrated on the effects of divorce on children and women, while the consequences of this phenomenon on men are regrettably neglected. research showed that divorced men are at highly significant risk for early death based on the cumulative number of years that men lived as divorcees. hypertension is mainly known as a consequence of distress among divorced men. A limited number of heterogeneous researches have concentrated on the experience of divorce in men. However, they are heading for more negative consequences. to eliminate these shortcomings, the Scoping review method will be used for running an exploratory study on the current heterogeneous literature and It will be useful for future research.

**Keywords:** Divorce, Men, Physical Health, Mental Health, Copings.

## Introduction

Divorce is one of by far the most major stressors that people may experience throughout their lives (Feeney, & Monin, 2016). Physical and Mental health consequences are upcoming incidents following marital separation (Feeney, & Monin, 2016). Not only do the forthcoming divorcees` experiences feature in wide variety of mental health issues such as feeling excessive guilt, devastating anxiety and inappropriate depression (e.g., Afifi & Hamrick, 2006; Waite, Luo, & Lewin, 2009; Cohen et al. 2007; Strohschein et al. 2005), but also the negative behavioral health related difficulties like cardio-vascular disease, substance abuse and chronic pain are happening accordingly (Shultz et al,2017;

Vieira et al ,2012; Trivedi, Sareen & Dhyani,2009; Liang and Chikritzhs 2012; Matzger et al. 2004). In other words, all-cause mortality criteria in general population would be increased in case a person has been divorced (Schultz et al, 2017).

Moreover, divorce has serious effects on general health by mediating role of psychological distress (Ferraro, & Nuriddin, 2006). So, the biological process that seems to be crucial for human well-being will be disrupted potentially (see Sbarra & Hazan, 2008) and, as a result, can escalate the risk of health problems. An example of this is that divorce intensify morbidity (Dahl, Hansen, & Vignes, 2015) and risk of premature death (Shor, Roelfs, Bugyi, & Schwartz, 2012). Also, Reactive hypertension in response to recall of separation exhibits the vulnerability leading to fragile cardiovascular health (feeney, & Monin, 2016).

To reveal how exactly divorce affects physical and health, it should be considered that divorce is not a simple phenomenon and consequently the underlying presumable pathways have to be studied in order to

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discovering disease-relevant biological responses (cf. Miller, Chen, & Cole, 2009). it is statistically proven that cardiovascular reactivity is one of prominent factors of bodily reaction to stress. Lund, Holstein, and Osler (2004) indicated highly significant risk for early death based on the cumulative number of years that men lived as divorcees hypertension is mainly known as a consequence of distress among divorced men (McEwen, 1998). To put it simply, people's minds control their heart health quality indirectly (Manuck, Kasprovicz, Monroe, Larkin, & Kaplan, 1989).

by the way, One's ability to sort out problems and manage stress is undoubtedly fundamental for a successful life (Spilka et al.2003). decreasing the level of stress happens when positive emotion is kept high and negative emotion down (Garcia, Adrianson, Amato, & Rapp-Ricciardi). therefore post-traumatic stress symptoms are related to emotion regulation strategies (Kiamarsi, Abolghasemi, Taherifard & Alian, 2020). researches show that there are different types of strategies for coping with stress, which can presumably be one's innate personal feature. In case an individual expose to a great deal of distress, he could apply two main categories of methods including problem-focused strategies and emotion-focused strategies respectively (Lazarus and Folkman 2006). Distressed people almost use one of the following coping strategies: changing the environment, changing themselves or both (Spilka et al. 2003).

Although divorced people all are in the same boat, the processes they experience are way more different (Buvino, & Sharkin, 2003). Differentiation between divorcees includes dimensions from demographic criteria to prior health status. The first and by far the most neglected aspect in study of divorce experience is gender differences. To our knowledge, the number of studies which have focused on gender differences are surprisingly limited. More exacerbated, researchers not only pondered women more vulnerable prerequisite to the divorce studies

but also the men's ordeal life after divorce is totally dismissed. Oppositely the restricted number of researches have exhibited that the negative outcome of depression in divorced men are far worse than such consequences in women (Hewitt & Turrell, 2011; Symoens et al., 2014). More considerable health declines and lower amounts of subjective well-being following separation are cases in points (Shor et al.2012; Stack and Eshleman 1998). besides, elevated risk of getting into negative health habits (Umberson 1992), much more declines in life satisfaction especially in domestic situations (Leopold and Kalmijn 2016), higher dissatisfaction with custodial arrangements (Bauserman, 2012; Sheets & Braver 1996), and deeper solitude and more reported social isolation are the other sort of problems men have to deal with (Dykstra and Fokkema 2007).

In this regard, a number of publications claim that divorced men have to deal with more mental health issues, because of staying married entails a different balance of rewards and costs for male and revealed in way more opposite coping strategies between genders. men may tend to show more externalizing stress, leading to problematic behavior such as substance use (Aneshensel et al. 1991; Bracke 1993; Horwitz et al. 1996; Simon 2002; Strohschein et al. 2005).

so, males were way more liable to the adverse effects of marital separation. Holt-Lunstad et al. (2010) claims that men are more prone to suffer from relationship termination than women, however marital status in this article is not fully clear. Kiecolt-Glaser and Newton (2001) in their wide-ranging review of publications on effects of marriage on health mentioned that "epidemiological studies of marital status show that being married, as compared to being unmarried, is more beneficial for men's health than for women's" (p. 496).

Men's strongest coping behavior is "distraction" which is specified by dedicating to overtime work or excessive workout (Choo et al., 1996), entering into

an alternative relationship too soon after separation and (Shimek & Bello, 2014), misuse of alcohol or drugs (Davis et al., 2003). because of the need for emotional support, men are very prone to avoid cutting off completely (Athenstaedt, Brohmer, Simpson, Müller, Schindling, Bacik, & Van Lange, 2020), seemingly, remarriage for the men is a way to achieve emotional and social support (Kalmijn 2015). It has been featured that males cope with their mourning far more difficult than females. whereas divorced men are also more likely to be in agony as result of their family collapse after divorce, females pass their mourning since their marital relationship end (Riessman ,1990). Nevertheless, seldom do men look for psychological help even for sorting out such grieves (Baum, 2004).

There are some theories which are relevant to divorce and health relationship, like social support theories (Uchino, 2006), theories of emotional systems (Butler, 2011), health behavior theories (Umberson, Crosnoe, Reczek, 2010), and the evolutionary theory of loneliness (Cacioppo & Patrick, 2008). One of by far the most frequently applicable models is divorce-stress-adjustment. According to divorce stress adjustment model in the study of Kittson (1992), a half of divorcees ameliorates over time and about a quarter of individuals would be exacerbated. studies suggest that in the wider period of time (i.e., 3+ years), the majority of divorcees adapt quite well to divorce while approximately 20% of divorcees experience pronounced psychological problems and lower well-being even years after their divorce (see also Perrig-Chiello et al., 2015).

In this way, many divorced adults look for counseling to help them dealing with repercussions of divorce (Emdr, 2018). however, it is obvious that divorce is a prevalent phenomenon all around the world, as epidemiological data has been showing (Mortelman, 2020). the focus of studies are more concentrated on the effects of divorce on children and women, the consequences of this phenomenon on men are regrettably neglected.

As stated, a limited number of heterogeneous research has concentrated on the experience of divorced in men. However, they are heading for more negative consequences (Helgeson, 1994). to eliminate these shortcomings, we intended to use a Scoping review method to run an exploratory study of the current heterogeneous literature. The goal is to demonstrate major concepts covered by studies on men`s experience of marital separation in addition to map the main possible sources. Moreover, this study aims to trace all types of accessible evidences throughout a comprehensive review. Therefore, this scoping review is an appropriate method for providing a brief overview of extend, range and nature of studies on men`s divorce processing.

### Objectives

As it mentioned in background, this scoping review will be conducted to get following goals:

1. To examine the extend, rang and nature of studies on how men process their divorce experience.
2. To summarize the current state of knowledge on men`s divorce processing.
3. To explore potential research gaps on the areas of topic And finally
4. To examine the necessity of running full systematic review and meta-analysis about this issue.

### Method

The method used in this scoping review is originated from works of Arksey and O`Malley (2005) and have been developed, amended and widely applied in the last decade (Tricco, Lillie, Zarin, O`Brien, Colquhoun & etc, 2016). The enhanced version of the Arksey and O`Malley`s primary framework described by Daudt, Mossel and Scott (2013), Albeit the key elements have almost remained unchanged (Daudt, van Mossel, & Scott, 2013). They depicted six stages that envelope the whole process of scoping review precisely. The entailed stages are:

- (a) identifying the research question which recommended not being so focused.
- (b) identifying relevant studies by use of searching

as comprehensive as possible.

- (c) study selection in accordance with eligibility criteria.
- (d) charting the data which means organizing data based on core themes reviewer have found.
- (e) compiling, summarizing and reporting the results,
- (f) Consultation with stakeholders

We have tried to be loyal to this framework as we found it useful and applicable.

### Stage1: Identifying the Research Question

In this framework, in order to develop the research questions which are covering the field of research thoroughly, it is suggested that all aspects of the specific field of research should be considered. Blending the scientific curiosity with the preliminary search of literature have led us to define the main question as following: What is the extent of evidence on aspects of men`s divorce processing? So, the focus of our review was to identify the dimensions of men`s divorce processing. The following initial questions were asked to ensure that we obtain a wide range of important research literature about the topic. Therefore, the combination of raw information received from multiple sources (cursory review of grey literature, expert`s opinion and clinical experience of authors) in addition to a preliminary search of the published papers have been directed us to amend the following questions for this Scoping review:

- 1- How do men adjust to post-divorce life?2- What are the actual Short-terms and Long-terms consequences of divorce in men?
- 3- What are the challenges of parenting for men After Divorce?
- 4- How does the men`s social support affect their post-divorce life?
- 5- What educational packages or interventions are available for using men After Divorce?
- 6- Do educational packages or interventions (if available) effect on adjustment of Men`s life after divorce?

### Stage 2: Identifying relevant studies

### Search Strategy

To conduct a comprehensive enough search for this scoping review, the electronic literature database will be searched. Besides, contacting with two expert will be made in order to expand the recording of relevant content.

### Electronic search

Studies on how men process their divorce experience will be searched. The current study`s search terms are visible on table1. one search strategy was developed for use in Scopous and then fit with other databases (see appendix 1). We employed diverse assortment of following keywords for our searches. Alluded keywords are derived from the terms MeSH also by means of free text method for reviewing.

As it is obvious, the term “Divorce” has been employing in various fields of study such as law, psychiatry, psychology, social works, social science and mental health in general. Accordingly, the searching of databases has conducted in all mentioned fields.

These search terms used to search electronic databases, including Scopus, PsycINFO, CINAHAL, PubMed.

### Other literature sources

For detecting probable relevant literature which may be remained uncover, contacting with two experts who feed into divorce research will be made.

**Table1: The search terms used**

<i>The search terms used</i>	
<i>post-divorc*</i>	<i>Breakup</i>
<i>postdivorc*</i>	<i>break* up</i>
<i>“post divorce”</i>	<i>dissolution marriage</i>
<i>“post divorced”</i>	<i>Uncoupl*</i>
<i>after divorc*</i>	<i>Ex-spouses</i>
<i>divorc*</i>	<i>Ex-wife</i>
<i>separat*</i>	<i>Adapt*</i>
<i>adaptation to divorce</i>	<i>Adjust*</i>
<i>“following separated”</i>	<i>Coping</i>
<i>“following divorced”</i>	<i>Deal*</i>
<i>post-separat*</i>	<i>React*</i>
<i>after separat*</i>	<i>reconstruct*</i>



of research and action which will guide us through the process and will lead us in more in-depth analysis if requires.

To summarize the results, findings will be reported to a great extent of relevancy. quantitative data will be presented according to types of interventions. All clinical trials, longitudinal and case-control studies will be included. Moreover, any qualitative studies will be analyzed thematically. The reports of qualitative data will be tabulated. To facilitate interpretation of closely related findings, additionally detailed description of all results will be given.

We will use a narrative approach to explore the gaps in the current research evidence. All-embracing results will be provided to make a detailed recommendation for upcoming research. We will include expert's probable sources to diminish the bias and to run a comprehensively enough review.

Like any other review, results of this scoping review should be interpreted by considering its limitations.

#### **Ethics and dissemination**

We aim to publish the completed article in a referee journal. The findings of this scoping review will be presented in related conferences. Ethical approval will be guaranteed as we will use published or presented studies.

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#### **Discussion**

Divorce is one the most stressful events in life. The process of adjusting to divorce in men is still unknown. Based on our knowledge, we will run the first review to map the men's adjustment to divorce. The chosen approach in this scoping review protocol provided a synthesis of variety of research evidence in an expanded field

One of advantages of this proposed review is to identify the post-divorce interventions that may potentially improve the men's quality of life after experiencing divorce. Besides, we anticipate that the

results of this scoping review will lead us to find out more about the priorities for following intervention studies and will identify gaps in current adjustment to life research. All outcomes of this scoping review will be relevant in some extent to researchers, family therapists and policymakers.

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- divorce”[tiab] OR “post divorced”[tiab] OR “after divorc\*”[tiab] OR divorc\*[tiab] OR separat\*[ti] OR “adaptation to divorce” [ti] OR “following separated”[ti] OR “following divorced”[ti] OR post-separat\*[ti] OR “after separat\*”[ti] “following separated”[ti] OR “following separation”[ti] OR “relationship separation”[tiab] OR break-up[tiab] OR Breakup[tiab] OR “break\* up” [tiab] OR “dissolution marriage” [tiab] OR “being single” [tiab] OR Ex-spouses[ti] OR Ex-wife[ti]) AND (Adapt\*[tiab] OR Adjust\*[tiab] OR Coping[tiab] OR Deal\*[tiab] OR React\*[ti] OR reconstruct\*[ti] OR Resilience[ti] OR competence[ti] OR functioning[ti]) AND (2010jan01:2020dec31[dp]))
- search strategy** (Scopus)
- ((TITLE-ABS-KEY (post-divorc\*) OR TITLE-ABS-KEY (postdivorc\*) OR TITLE-ABS-KEY (“post divorce”) OR TITLE-ABS-KEY (“post divorced”) OR TITLE-ABS-KEY (“after divorc\*”) OR TITLE-ABS-KEY (divorc\*) OR TITLE (separat\*) OR TITLE (“adaptation to divorce”) OR TITLE (“following separated”) OR TITLE (“following divorced”) OR TITLE (post-separat\*) OR TITLE (“after separat\*”) OR TITLE (“following separated”) OR TITLE (“following separation”) OR TITLE-ABS-KEY (“relationship separation”) OR TITLE-ABS-KEY (break-up) OR TITLE-ABS-KEY (breakup) OR TITLE-ABS-KEY (“break? up”) OR TITLE-ABS-KEY (“dissolution marriage”) OR TITLE-ABS-KEY (“being single”) OR TITLE (ex-spouses) OR TITLE (ex-wife)) AND (TITLE-ABS-KEY (adapt\*) OR TITLE-ABS-KEY (adjust\*) OR TITLE-ABS-KEY (coping) OR TITLE-ABS-KEY (deal\*) OR TITLE (react\*) OR TITLE (reconstruct\*) OR TITLE (resilience) OR TITLE (competence) OR TITLE (functioning))) AND PUBYEAR > 2010 AND PUBYEAR < 2021 AND (LIMIT-TO (SUBJAREA , “SOC”) OR LIMIT-TO (SUBJAREA , “PSYC”))
- search strategy** (Psyinfo and CINAHL)
- TI (post-divorc\* OR postdivorc\* OR “post divorce”

## Appendix

### search strategy (pubmed)

((post-divorc\*[tiab] OR postdivorc\*[tiab] OR “post

OR “post divorced” OR after divorc\* OR divorc\* OR separat\* OR “adaptation to divorce” OR “following separated” OR “following divorced” OR post-separat\* OR “after separat\*” “following separated” OR “following separation” OR “relationship separation” OR break-up OR Breakup OR “break\* up” OR “dissolution marriage” OR “being single” OR “Uncoupl\*” OR Ex-spouses OR Ex-wife) AND TI (Adapt\* OR Adjust\* OR Coping OR Deal\* OR React\* OR reconstruct\* OR Resilience OR competence OR functioning)



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