Comparison of depression, anxiety, recognizable flexibility and quality of life between divorced and ordinary women under the support of Imam Khomeini committee

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A B S T R A C T

Quality of life refers to the personal standards of the people about their own life in general and specifically about their thoughts and feelings. The objective of the present research is to compare the level of depression, anxiety, recognizable flexibility and quality of life between divorced and ordinary women under the support of Imam Khomeini Committee in Jam. a number of 50 cases (25 ordinary and 25 divorced cases) were selected randomly between 1000 cases of ordinary women and 150 cases of divorced women under the support of Imam Khomeini Committee in Jam. Data was gathered using the questionnaire between the attendees and after their approval. The research tools were Beck Anxiety Inventory (BAI), Beck Depression Inventory (BDI), World Health Organization Quality of Life – Brief Form (WHOQOL-BREF) and Acceptance and Action Questionnaire II (AAQ-II). The results using T-test for independent groups revealed that the anxiety and depression of divorced women were significantly higher than ordinary women. Besides, quality of life and recognizable flexibility of divorced women is lower than ordinary women. The findings of the research showed that as divorced women has passed a difficult stage in their lives, they could not overcome their anxiety and this resulted in an increase in depression coefficient, reduction in quality of their life and their flexibility. It is suggested that supportive psychotherapy courses are performed for these cases to get compatible with their new conditions.

Keywords: Quality of life, Depression, anxiety, Acceptance and action, Divorced women, Ordinary women.

INTRODUCTION

Divorce and separation are the most important causes of breakup in family structure. Divorce is defined as leaving engagement or marrying and it is a contract between the man and the woman to abandon matrimony[1]. Official statistics shows the changes in general approach to divorce since twenty years ago. There is higher possibility to experience hardship in women as they have no suitable financial and

cultural support to live alone after divorce and the society does not consider the divorced women as usual as other girls and/or women.

One of the significant factors of social health evaluation is the assessment of psychological health in that society and the role of this parameter in social activeness and efficiency. Human health is the result of his attitudes and a function of his environment[2]. Divorce is one of the most important incidents of the people and is usually categorized as one of the five high stress events. Therefore, it is absolutely expected that divorced women experience less favorable life than non-divorced women. The non-divorced women are those who continue their usual life in marriage form.

Depression is a deep sorrow and anxiety is a stable agitation state in the manner of human and can be easily diagnosed with psychological tests. Psychological flexibility is defined as: connections as an aware person in present moment and based on the conditions, and behave in agreement with preferred individual values[3]. Psychological stiffness (no flexibility) is considered as: extra cognitive fusion and involvement in relation with the texture of a situation and have problem in selection of behaviors compatible with values and previously known objectives. Haffarian et al [1] studied the quality of life for divorced women of Shiraz and showed that they have inferior quality. Also a high level of their quality of life is filled with demographic parameters like age and social relations. It sounds that divorced women experience lower quality of life; since quality of life is defined as satisfaction or interest for needs and the degree of suitable and positive relation with others, self-respect and creativity of happiness. Came in conclusion that quality of life in relative to health is dependent on environmental conditions[4]. Bowman[5] told that a high percentage of low-income rank of society is divorced women. Dunning et al [6] in his analytic research about the quality of life announced that divorced and middle aged women are good predictors for weak quality of life. Other studies also showed that prevalence of fear disorder and intense insomnia which has significant effect on people (Hajak) [7] is observed more frequently in divorced women.

METHODOLOGY

Since four parameters of psychological situation were compared in the present study for ordinary and divorced women, causative-comparative method was applied. The sample space was 1000 ordinary and 150 divorced women under the support of Imam Khomeini Committee in Jam and 25 divorced and 25 ordinary women were evaluated at random. The tools of data gathering were as follows:

1) Beck Depression Inventory (BDI), 2nd Edition

This inventory is a self-report inventory with 21 notes and measures the intensity of depression. In this inventory, the notes are classified in a four-mark scale and higher marks show higher depression. The full mark is in the range of 0-63 (Beck et al. 1996).

2) Quality of Life Scale

It is a 16-item questionnaire representing the degree of satisfaction of the patients from their life. The scale of the items is evaluated from 1 to 7 that scale 7 shows the highest satisfaction.

3) Beck Anxiety Inventory (BAI)

This inventory was employed to measure the intensity of anxiety. It has 21 prepositions calculating the intensity of anxiety and each preposition has four answers (0-3) that classifies the symptoms of anxiety with four-degree scale (not at all, slightly, intermediately, intensively). The range of the marks are also from 0 to 63.

4) Acceptance and Action Questionnaire – 2nd Edition (AAQ-II)

This questionnaire is a ten-point self-report that measures the level of tendency for acceptance of external experience. The scale is adjusted on a seven-score base, higher scores show acceptance and lower scores show rejection of external experiences.

The analysis of variances performed by SPSS 16 using descriptive and inferential statistics methods. In descriptive statistics frequency table, average and standard deviation were applied and in inferential statistics T-test was used.

RESULTS

The following table shows demographic information

Table 1. Age frequency and education level of ordinary women

Education Age	illiterate	Primary School	Secondary School	Diploma	Associate Degree	BA	Graduate Degree	Total
20-30	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	**1**
31-40	0	8	4	3	1	1	1	**17**
41-50	1	4	0	1	0	0	0	**6**
51-60	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	**1**
Total	1	13	4	5	1	1	1	**25**

Only one ordinary woman at the age range of 41-50 was illiterate. Women with primary school education grouped as 8, 4 and 1 persons with 31-40, 41-50 and 51-60 years of old, respectively. Only 4 women left the school after secondary school with the age of 31-40. Diploma degree was 1, 3 and 1 women with age ranges of 20-30, 31-40 and 41-50. Ordinary women with academic studies were 1 associate degree, 1 BA and 1 graduate degree all with 31-40 years old age. The literate women were distributed as 1, 17, 6 and 1 women with the age ranges of 20-30, 31-40, 41-50 and 51-60, respectively.

Table 2. Age frequency and education level of divorced women

Education Age	illiterate	Primary School	Secondary School	Diploma	Associate Degree	BA	Graduate Degree	Total
20-30	0	5	4	0	0	0	0	**9**

31-40	0	5	2	2	1	1	0	**10**
41-50	0	2	0	1	0	0	0	**3**
51-60	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	**3**
Total	0	15	6	3	0	1	0	**25**

According to Table 2, none of the divorced women was illiterate, but 5, 5, 2 and 3 of them had primary education within the age group of 20-30, 31-40, 41-50 and 51-60, respectively. Besides, 4 women with 20-30 years old age and 2 women with 31-40 years old age had passed secondary school. Diploma was observed with two consecutive age range of 31-40 and 41-50 with 2 and 1 women. Only two 31-40 years old women had academic degree but none of them had graduate degree. In all, different women were classified as 9, 10, 3 and 3 within 20-30, 31-40, 41-50 and 51-60 age groups, respectively. In both cases, the most frequent women were 31-40 years old with primary school education. It means that both cases were nearly homogeneous.

Assumption I: depression in divorced women is higher than ordinary women.

Table 3. Results of T-test for assumption I

Groups	average	Standard deviation	Levene Test		T	df	Sig
			p	f			
Divorced women	25.48	8.14	2.6	0.11	5.33	48	0.001
Ordinary women	11.08	10.75					

Table 3 shows that considering the average and standard deviation of divorced women (25.48, 8.14) and ordinary women (11.08, 10.75), degree of depression in divorced women is significantly higher than ordinary women and this difference is not accidentally (p = 0.001, df = 48, T = 5.33 and one-sided test).

Assumption II: anxiety in divorced women is higher than ordinary women.

Table 4. Results of T-test for assumption II

Groups	average	Standard deviation	Loven Test		T	df	Sig
			p	f			
Divorced women	49.4	12.02	0.59	0.28	2.75	48	0.004
Ordinary women	39.76	12.68					

Table 4 reveals that considering the average and standard deviation of divorced women (49.4, 12.02) and ordinary women (39.76, 12.68), divorced women are more anxious than ordinary women and this difference is significant (p = 0.004, df = 48, T = 2.75 and one-sided test).

Assumption III: quality of life in divorced women is lower than ordinary women.

Table 5. Results of T-test for assumption III

Groups	average	Standard deviation	Loven Test		T	df	Sig
			p	f			
Divorced women	74	11.23	0.8	0.59	4.8	48	0.000
Ordinary women	88.64	10.29					

Table 5 shows that considering the average and standard deviation of divorced women (74, 11.23) and ordinary women (88.64, 10.29), quality of life in divorced women is significantly lower than ordinary women and this difference is not resulted by chance (p = 0.000, df = 48, T = 4.8 and one-sided test).

Assumption IV: recognizable flexibility in divorced women is lower than ordinary women.

Table 6. Results of T-test for assumption IV

Groups	average	Standard deviation	Loven Test		T	df	Sig
			p	f			
Divorced women	52.6	10.29	0.59	2.17	4.4	48	0.000
Ordinary women	33.44	11.23					

Table 6 reveals that considering the average and standard deviation of divorced women (74, 11.23) and ordinary women (88.64, 10.29), divorced women have less recognizable flexibility than ordinary women and this difference is significant (p=0.000, df = 48, T = 4.4 and one-sided test).

CONCLUSION

Findings of this research confirmed the assumptions. As previously predicted, degree of depression and anxiety in divorced women is higher than ordinary women; similar to the findings of Ghare Daghi[8] who identified that as neurotic disorders. Mentioned that divorce hurts the perceptions and mentality of the person more than his/her trend of personal communications. The negative effects of these two parameters are the results of various problems occurring during divorce process. It may also increase due to abstinence and suspicion to personal relations, especially with opposite sex.

Anxiety phenomenon is more frequently observed in these women. As they lose their sentimental, security, communicational and even their prestigious support, they may become suspicious to people and their conceptual. Therefore, high degree of anxiety in divorced women is representative of their need for support which has been destroyed in separation process.

Furthermore, their quality of life was evaluated lower than others, confirming the findings of Haffarian et al [1] One of the parameters involved in quality of life is lifestyle. Lifestyle can lead to troublesome situations as a result of wrong choices, but the situation of selection is also very important. For instance, divorce in supportive families probably result to better adaptability to new situations. While in smaller families, with hurtful relations, it approaches to psychical pressures. Therefore, it should be investigated whether in this group of women, their quality of life is a function of their wrong choice of divorce (their marriage state could be better) or is influenced by environmental pressures? This is out of scope of this research and can be studied in another plan.

For assumption IV, about recognizable flexibility of women it was verified that divorced women had lower flexibility than ordinary ones. It is obvious that adaptability and compatibility with a high pressure condition like divorce and new role in the society requires higher flexibility. But it seems that divorced women have gained nothing of that which leads to higher depression and anxiety.

Accordingly, divorced women confront intensive psychological problems not only due to living with no sentimental and communicational support, but also lower adaptability and compatibility in comparison with their married counterparts. It is also possible that psychosomatic and sleeping disorders increase dramatically in this group of people (as Hajak[7] proved that in his research).

It is highly recommended that for women at the first stages of separation, appropriate psychological courses are implemented for better compatibility with new situation and confrontation with better lifestyle before occurrence of abovementioned problems. Although researchers found that divorced women feel liberty after separation, findings of this research showed that this artificial liberty leads to anxiety and depression sense for them. For those who has separated before and experienced these problems, as described in literature, there are various psychological methods with positive outcome. But none of the researchers used supportive treatment and it is suggested to testify this method thoroughly.

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