

# Post divorce effects on family members in Egypt at The Integrative psychiatry clinic ( IPC )

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**Introduction:** In Egypt numbers divorce cases increased over past decade from 100,000 to 186,000 .It means that from 980,000 marriages held every year ,20 % get a divorce .These ratios are similar in middle east too.Some members of Social solidarity committee attributed this rise to hard economic conditions & low employment rates (**Ahram online ,November 2018** Urbanization has played a great role in rising numbers of divorce in the past years (El Refaey S. 2010 ), as it has affected the expectations of marriage shifting from traditional marriage to different and new requests (Al-Kazi L.2008 ), New terms are allowed to be said lately despite the fear of stigma of divorce ; for example “ incompatibility , expectations from gender roles at home , higher educational levels for women “. Incompatibility is now a good enough reason for asking for divorce , also high educational levels of women associated with their increase of employment has lead to a major shift in their role in the society , it was expected to lead to more home stability yet unfortunately it's not what we see according to studies and statistics . So ,not only can women leave marriages for different and new reasons but also they have divorce without having to go back to living with their parents (authorities) .In middle east &Egypt included , divorce is associated with stress that has a negative impact on the mental health of individuals of the family , not only the husband ,wife and children , but also it propagates to reach the in-laws (Cohen O., Finzi-Dottan R. ,2012)

## Post divorce effects study on families :

- Our study was a qualitative study which was done in our clinic ( Integrative psychiatry clinic ).
- Study population: included divorced family members , 20 families were enrolled in the study ; 10 families annually .
- Clinical diagnosis was done for children and their parents .
- Our study was of 2 years duration .
- Follow up period for 1st set of families was 2 years , for 2nd set was 1 year .
- In Our Clinic family members were distributed on team members .
- With weekly peer discussion and monthly or bimonthly peer supervision.

## Assessment & therapy

- All families underwent psychiatric assessment .
- 50 to 60% of Adults required medications .
- Children nearly required no medications.
- All families (children and adults ) underwent psychotherapy .
- All children enrolled were engaged in art therapy sessions and

workshops .

## Results :

Parents and children were equally affected 50 % of parents and children were affected with different diagnoses including ;

- Depression
- Anxiety
- Separation anxiety
- Sleeping disorders
- Nocturnal enuresis
- Children were more resilient than adults .
- It took 6-12 months for patients (children and adults ) to reach well being state
- follow up duration for 1st set of families were (2 years) , for 2nd family set is nearly 1 year . **20 % of divorced families in our study remarried.1 family didn't show up again .**

**Conclusion :** Marriage education is mandatory to newly married couples , that would many of their unrealistic expectations about being a husband and wife. Explicit ,honest discussions between couples approaching marriage about their expectations concerning sharing the same house and roles for each gender. Independence developmental crisis, has to be allowed to take place away from the marriage frame , specially in middle east and Egypt as women and men are treated as children in their parents homes till their marriage ,or in best case scenarios , women are raised up to treat all men as their children and become an excellent care giver with zero skills as a woman or wife. Approach to divorce , should be family based considering all the nuclear family members and in needed cases in-laws too. Separated families (emotional and physical without any divorce papers ) should be included in statistics ,as separated families are as disrupted as divorced families

**Recommendations :**Marriage preparation courses ,could be mandatory before finalizing paper work of marriage.Research to be done on larger sample size to learn more about difference in dynamics in different geographical locations (governorates) ,social standards, religions in Egypt .

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