

## Coping with divorce in men: a scoping review

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### Abstract

Researchers believe that separation and divorce are the most important stressful events that can happen in life. Therefore, divorce is a complex and painful process that leads to changes in different areas of life and requires coping strategies. This is despite the fact that more studies have focused on women and children after divorce, and men's divorce has been neglected. The present scoping review seeks to investigate, identify, and plot the main concepts relating to men's divorce and its dimensions, domains, impacts and factors based on the main references and evidence. The scoping review method was used to search electronic databases for relevant articles. Of the 3025 abstracts initially identified, after screening both abstracts and full texts, 26 studies were selected for inclusion in this review. After abstracting key information from each study, a content analysis was conducted. Five themes were identified from the content analysis: 1) Demographic, 2) child custody, 3) Psychological factors, 4) attachment style and 5) Coping strategies. This study explained and identified the men's divorce components, its results can reduce the negative effects of divorce on men.

**keywords:** Divorce, Separation, Men, Farther, Adjustment, Scoping review.

### Introduction

Epidemiological data shows the prevalence of divorce in the United States at 2.9 per 1,000 total population in 2018 (Ely & Driscoll, 2020) and in Europe at 4.4 in 2016 (Eurostat, 2020). Thus, based on statistics, divorce is a widespread phenomenon in the world (Mortelmans, 2020). It results in a global interest in the topic of divorce and its consequences, considering the significant impact on individuals and society (Akpan & Ezeume, 2020). Divorce, as a traumatic life experience, is one of the greatest stressors in life with potentially negative

consequences (Feeney & Monin, 2016). Divorce negatively impacts their social network and impairs their well-being, quality of life, and mental health (Cruwys & Gunaseelan, 2016; Kołodziej-Zaleska & Przybyła-Basista, 2020; Lagnado et al., 2017).

While researchers have indicated that divorce affects men and women differently (Salehi et al., 2020; Strizzi et al., 2022), the experiences of divorced women and mothers have been researched to a greater extent than the outcomes of divorced men and fathers (Akpan & Ezeume, 2020). It is necessary to understand that the impacts of divorce on men and fathers are as immediate and compelling as those on mothers and children. Particularly from a clinical perspective, research devoted to examining the well-being of divorced fathers has been sparse (Bottom, 2013). Therefore, the focus on men's experience of divorce and the process of adjustment to this stressful phenomenon seems necessary.

As a result of the numerous transitions they face

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after divorce, men experience many difficulties in divorce (Bottom, 2013). Although previous studies have shown economic benefits for divorced men (Peterson, 1996; Smock, 1994), whereas Lin, & Brown (2021) reported that men's financial situation after divorce is variable. Overall, the economic consequences for men after divorce appear to be modest (Lin & Brown, 2021). Divorce, especially for men, is thought to have negative consequences in other areas, such as social and psychological effects (Kalmijn, 2005; Rizwan & Gafoordeen, 2021).

In another area, several studies have reported that men are more vulnerable to the negative effects of divorce and experience a mix of emotional reactions such as sadness, anxiety, guilt and depression, anger, frustration, greater feelings of loneliness, and social isolation (Bulut & Dağtaş, 2022; Rizwan & Gafoordeen, 2021). Among men, lower education, initiation of divorce by the former spouse (compared to both), and higher levels of divorce conflict significantly predicted higher levels of anxiety symptoms (Hald et al., 2022). In addition, lower education, fewer previous divorces, initiation of divorce by the former spouse, the former spouse having a new partner (compared to both), and higher levels of conflict are significantly predicting higher levels of depressive symptoms for men. In general, divorced men struggle with problems such as lack of positive emotions (Rizwan & Gafoordeen, 2021) and a disproportionate decline in satisfaction with family life (Leopold & Kalmijn, 2016).

In addition, studies reported health problems and substance abuse (Rizwan & Gafoordeen, 2021) for men after divorce and they revealed that suicide increased (Richardson, Robb & O'Connor, 2021) among men following divorce. studies show that men have different outcomes in life after divorce with respect to the presence of children. For example, men are more dissatisfied with custody arrangements (Bauserman, 2012), particularly during the COVID-19 crisis (Iztayeva, 2021). In addition, Stewart and Schwebel (1986) examined the

effects of custody arrangements on the adjustment of recently divorced fathers and showed that the presence of children is an important facilitating, stabilizing factor for men's post-divorce adjustment. Following the stress-adjustment perspective in divorce (Amato, 2000), people successively go through one of two different processes of divorce adjustment: the short-term crisis model and the chronic stress model (Amato, 2000). Based on the "short-term crisis" conceptualization, post-divorce stress is relatively brief and returns to pre-divorce levels after two or three years. In this model, the crisis is temporary and has only a brief impact on the individual's well-being (Langlais et al., 2016). However, the chronic stress model shows that the stressors of divorce persist and can combine over time (Amato, 2000). According to Amato (2000), protective factors determine which process individuals experience.

For example, researches consider attachment style (Davarinejad et al., 2022; Guzmán-González et al., 2019), social support (Sbarra & Whisman, 2022) and Spirituality (Krumrei et al., 2009, 2011; Zare et al., 2019) as determinant factors. Reaching the level of required adjustment to divorce depends on overcoming negative consequences, managing stressors, and employing protective and mediating factors (Yárnöz-Yaben, 2015). A great number of theories examined "adjustment to divorce" in the framework of general stress, have focused on factors such as stressful and unfavorable conditions, interpersonal and structural resources, demographic factors (Zare et al., 2019).

As it is discussed in previous section, the number of studies focusing on the experience of divorce in men are surprisingly limited. To eliminate these shortcomings, a Scoping review method employed to run an exploratory study in order to sum up the current heterogeneous literature. The main objective is to quickly map the major concepts in this research area, main sources and types of evidence which are available and can be discovered in cases it has not

been comprehensively reviewed before. Therefore, in this study the method of scoping review employed to provide a brief overview of extend, range and nature of studies on the men to divorce. The other goal is to categorize and summarize the current state of knowledge about the subject matter to find out whether research gaps are considerable.

### Method

Based on PRISMA scoping review extension guideline, scoping review methodology employed to extend, range and nature of studies on “how male divorcees adjust to divorce”. Therefore, peer reviewed studies about the experience of men from divorce have been collected and analyzed. The scoping review methodology which is originated from works of (Arksey & O’Malley, 2005) Arksey and O’Malley (2005) applied in this study. This method has been developed, amended and widely applied in the last decade (Tricco et al., 2016). According to (Arksey & O’Malley, 2005) five stages defined for this method: 1) identifying research question(s) 2) searching and retrieving studies 3) study selection 4) data extraction and 5) collecting and summarizing data.

In the first stage we identified data questions. A mixture of scientific curiosity and the preliminary search of literature headed us to the following questions:

How do men adjust to post-divorce life?

What are the actual Short-terms and Long-terms consequences of divorce in men?

What are the challenges of parenting for men After Divorce?

How does the men`s social support affect their post-divorce life?

What educational packages or interventions are available for using men After Divorce?

Do educational packages or interventions (if available) effect on adjustment of Men`s life after divorce

### Search strategy

in the second stage, relevant studies identified. To

conduct a comprehensive enough search for this scoping review, the electronic literature database was searched. Besides, contacting with two experts was made in order to expand the recording of relevant content which may have remained uncover.

The current study’s search terms are visible on table 1. one search strategy was developed for use in Scopus 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.

**Table 1:** The search terms used

The search terms used	
post-divorc*	Breakup
postdivorc*	break* up
“post divorce”	dissolution marriage
“post divorced”	being single
after divorc*	Uncoupl*
divorc*	Ex-spouses
separat*	Ex-wife
adaptation to divorce	Adapt*
“following separated”	Adjust*
“following divorced”	Coping
post-separat*	Deal*
after separat*	React*
“following separated”	reconstruct*
“following separation”	Resilience
“relationship separation”	Competence
break-up	functioning

These search terms used to search electronic databases, including Scopus, PsycINFO, CINAHAL, PubMed to limit identified studies to the domain of psychology and social science.

### Study selection

In the third stage, for selecting studies, Two reviewers (HShF,ZB) independently screened titles and abstracts of studies based on inclusion and exclusion criteria. Then they evaluated studies according to the full texts of selected articles. Filtering out the unacceptable studies rooted in eligibility criteria. Each stage has been done by reviewers independently. Figure. 1 below shows the

process of the study Selection.

According to the methodology of scoping review (Arksey, & O'Malley, 2005), the methodological quality of eligible papers was not appraised. In other words, the risk of bias was not assessed in the included studies.

### Data extraction

The main method for extracting data in scoping reviews is data charting. In the fourth stage, characteristics and results extracted from all included articles were presented comprehensively.

**Table 2:** Inclusion and Exclusion criteria

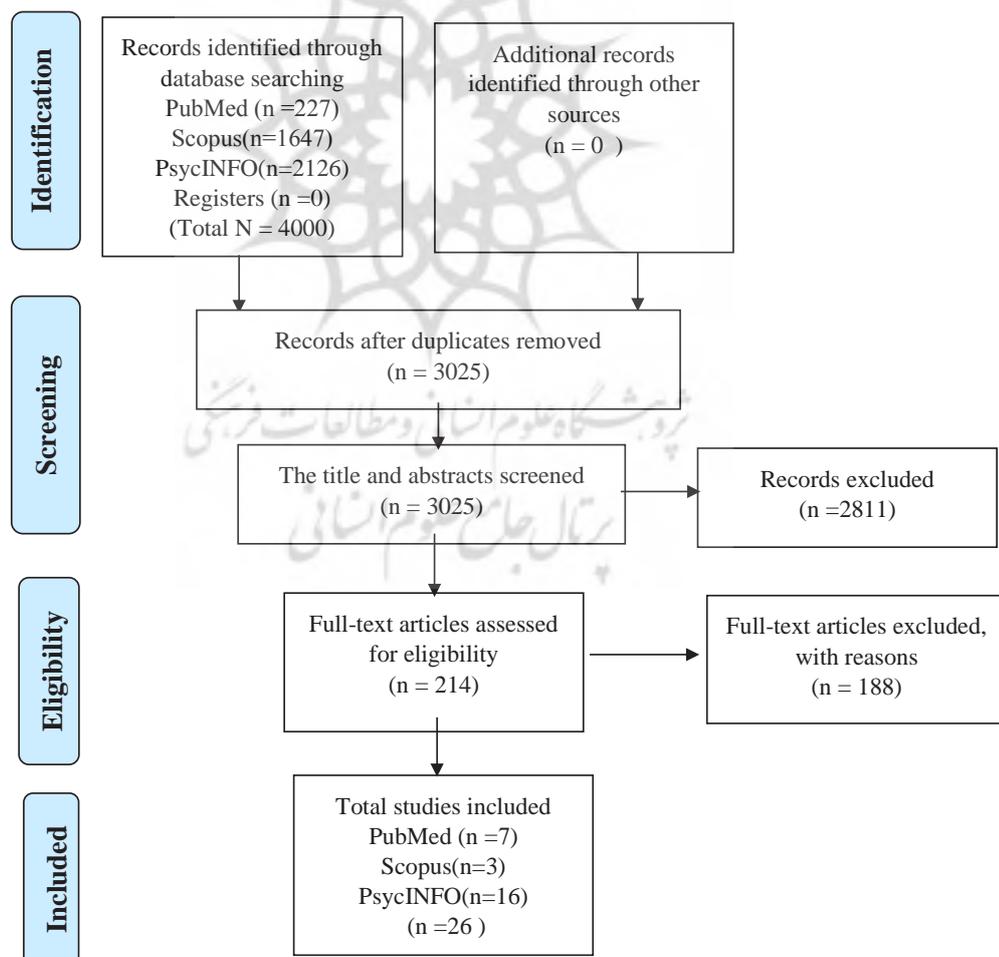
Inclusion criteria:	Exclusion criteria:
-Articles in any language were eligible.	-Homosexual divorced were not eligible
- Articles that have been published from 2010 to December 2020.	-Participants who are younger than 18 years old are not eligible.
- participants of the studies are men with divorce experience.	

The mentioned electronic form was filled out by two of the authors (H.SH.F. and Z.B.) independently. Any disagreements were settled by discussion and consensus between reviewers. In the current study, these data showed in the “results” section.

## Results

### Brief review of the studies

As mentioned, a total of 26 studies were reviewed, of which 2 results of studies (1,3) showed the Demographic in men's divorce, 7 studies (2,3,6,19,22-24) Child custody evaluated, 18 studies



**Figure 1:** Flow diagram of the literature search and study selection process

addressed Psychological factors (1-4,6,8,9,11,12,14-24), 5 studies attachment style (4,13,15,18,25), 5 studies (5,10,11,16,26) Coping strategies had been discussed in a single study. Figure 3 depicts these results. Also, Table 3 and Figure 2 provides the frequencies of the studies in different years. As can be seen, most studies were conducted in 2020 (5 studies). According to Table 3, 7 out of the 26 studies adopted longitudinal, 2 studies were multi design, 10 studies were observational, and 2 studies adopted qualitative approaches.

**Table 3:** Frequency of the articles by year of publication

Publication Year	Number of Articles
2020	5
2019	1
2018	2
2017	1
2016	4
2015	1
2014	4
2013	4
2012	1
2011	3
2010	1

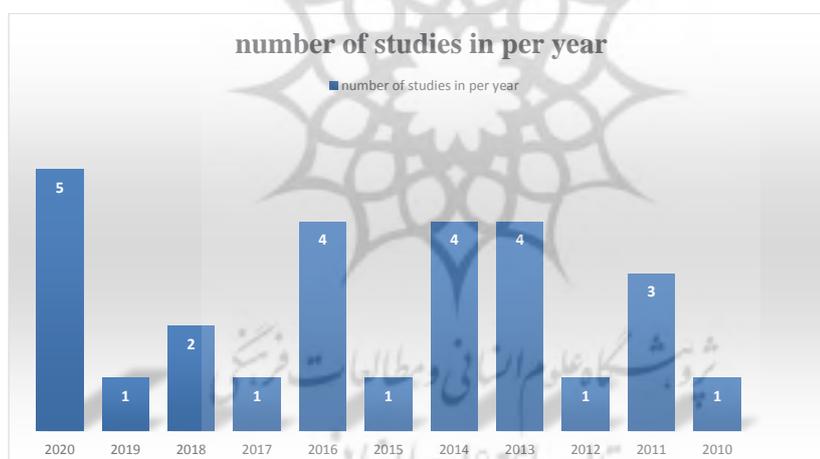
2016	4
2015	1
2014	3
2013	4
2012	1
2011	3
2010	1
Total of Articles	26

**Table 4:** Distribution of articles used according to the type of study

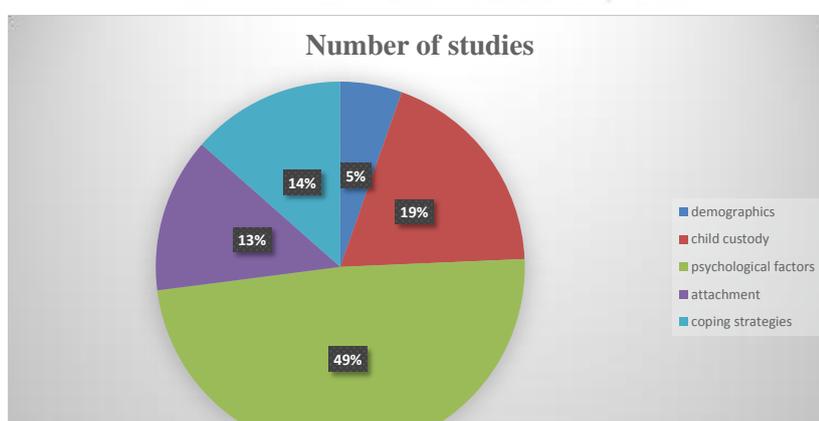
Study type Number	Number of Articles
Longitudinal	6
Multi design	2
Observational	16
Qualitative Study	2
Total of Articles	26

### Main findings

The main findings from this review were the: 1)



**Figure 2:** Graph of the number of studies in per year



**Figure 3:** number of articles in each scope.

Demographic, 2)child custody, 3)Psychological factors, 4)attachment style, 5)Coping strategies. among divorced men. It is noteworthy that most of the studies used in this review were not specifically about men's divorce, and data related to divorced men were difficult to extract. Findings were sorted by title, author's name, year, country, methodological design, population, measures, study aim, and main finding in the following table.

Although experiencing divorce in midlife is awkward, Tosi, Marco, and Thijs van den Broek (2020) found that such an experience in men is the same as women. On the other hand, the fertility history might moderate the negative consequences of marital break-up in later life. these results come from the analysis of the effect of such a break-up on the mental health of 909 adults. these findings indicated that depressive symptoms would increase among divorcees in the year following separation. In

**Table 5:** matrix of scoping review articles N= 26

Title	Author(s)/ year/location	Aim	Study design/ sample/ measure(s)	findings
1 Gray divorce and mental health in the United Kingdom	Tosi, M., & van den Broek, T. 2020, UK	The analysis of the effect of the marital break-up on the mental health of mature adults (50 and older) to test two different divorce models (crises and chronic strain).	Observational method using longitudinal data/ N=391 only the number of male participants was reported. Depression subscale of the general health questionnaire was employed	Men's adjustment to divorce was assessed the same as women's adjustment. There were no significant differences between men who have a history of divorce and the ones who experienced their first divorce. The fertility history helped men to better adjust in terms of moderating the negative consequences of divorce on men's mental health. Older adults depressive symptom are decreasing during two years after divorce. Post divorce adjustment is faster for people without children than parents.
2 Child living arrangements following separation and mental health of parents in Sweden	Fritzell, S., Gähler, M., & Fransson, E. 2020, Sweden	The analysis of the association between living arrangements and fathers' mental health and its interaction with socioeconomic and social circumstances.	Survey N= 4228 Mental health anxiety and worry (yes/no questions)	Both re-partnered and single fathers who accept joint physical custody have felt more anxiety and experienced more worry.

3	Emotional adaptation to relationship dissolution in parents and non-parents: A new conceptual model and measure	Millings, A., Hirst, S. L., Sirois, F., & Houlston, C. 2020, Brazil	the aim of the study was to assess whether emotional adaptation is related to other potential constructs within its nomological network	Observational N = 92 10-item questionnaire made by researchers	men are less likely to have their child(ren)'s custody. Men are less likely to initiate divorce. Men showed less conscientiousness, less amount of agreeable, and more emotional intelligence.
4	Romantic Attachment and Post Breakup Depression Symptoms and Suicidal Behavior	Brassard, A., Gehl, K., & Lecomte, T. 2018, Canada	The investigation of the associations between attachment insecurities, depressive symptoms, and suicidal behavior) following a romantic breakup considering the moderating role of gender.	Observational N= 19 -Depressive symptom (Beck Depression Inventory-II) -Suicidal behaviors (Columbia Suicide Severity Rating Scale) -Romantic attachment (Experiences in Close Relationships)	The Anxious attachment style is significantly associated with depressive symptoms, the severity, and the intensity of suicidal behavior following break-up.
5	Validity of the Breakup Strategies Questionnaire in Korea: Exploratory Structural Equation Modeling and Rasch's Modeling	Lee, D. G., Sohn, H., Bae, B. H., & Song, Y. 2018, South Korea	examining the validity of the Korean implementation of the Breakup Strategies Questionnaire	Survey(psychometrics) N= 159 for study I N= 52 for study II The strategy of breakups (Breakup Strategies Questionnaire)	Male participants were reported to mainly use Avoidance/withdrawal and Open confrontation. No significant gender differences regarding Indirect manipulation and Positive tone/self-blame were reported.
6	Is Divorce More Painful When Couples Have Children? Evidence From Long-Term Panel Data on Multiple Domains of Well-being.	Leopold, T., & Kalmijn, M. 2016, Netherlands	Assessing the role of having children as a moderator of divorce effects on adult well-being.	Longitudinal The sample size was not reported. General, Economic, and family well-being (questionnaire)	Having children is associated with sharpener well-being especially when they are younger. Fathers' economic well-being is less affected than that of mothers. The levels of well-being are promoted in the long term after divorce.

7	Trajectories of Psychological Adaptation to Marital Breakup after a Long-Term Marriage	Knöpfli, B., Morselli, D., & Perrig-Chiello, P. 2016 Switzerland	Exploring the trajectories of psychological adaptation to the marital breakup, and examining the variables that facilitate the recovery or exacerbate the mourning level in terms of intrapersonal resources, and variables related to the relationship and SES.	Survey N=113 Life satisfaction, Depression, Hopelessness, Subjective health, Mourning (yes/no question)	Adaptation to divorce needs to be formed for most people. Although a great number of divorcees adjust to divorce successfully, a minority of people cannot adapt well. Gender did not play a significant role in adaptation to divorce.
8	Temporal effects of separation on suicidal thoughts and behaviors	Batterham, P. J., Fairweather-Schmidt, A. K., Butterworth, P., Calcar, A. L., Mackinnon, A. J., & Christensen, H. 2014 Australia	Exploring the long-term effects of relationship break-up on suicidality.	Population-based longitudinal study N= 998 Alcohol use (Alcohol Use Disorders Identification Test), depression (Patient Health Questionnaire-9), anxiety symptoms (Generalized Anxiety Disorder-7)	Suicidal ideation and attempt have been minimized during five years following the divorce.
9	Relationship separation and mental health problems: findings from a 30-year longitudinal study	Gibb, S. J., Fergusson, D. M., & Horwood, L. J. 2011 New Zealand	Examining the associations between relationship separation and mental health problems.	Longitudinal The sample size was not reported. Depression, Anxiety disorder, Suicidal attempt/ideation, Alcohol abuse/dependence, Illicit drug abuse/dependence Total number of psychiatric disorders All used interview	Separation is associated with increased rates of depression, suicidal behavior, and total mental health problems. However, it was not possible to determine the causal direction of the relationship between separation and mental health problems. No gender differences were found.

10	Defense mechanisms and coping strategies in men and women: a comparative and structural study based on the artistic production of people suffering from a break-up of their life project	Schiltz, L., Ciccarello, A., Ricci-Boyer, L., & Schiltz, J. 2013 Luxemburg	Understanding the difference between men and women in using coping styles for processing divorce.	Qualitative N=79  Qualitative interview for assessing defense mechanism.	Men showed a better integration of archaic violence, passing through cognitive and artistic elaboration.
11	Impact of stressful death or divorce in people with HIV: A prospective examination and the buffering effects of religious coping and social support	Ironson, G., Henry, S. M., & Gonzalez, B. D. 2020 US	Examining the impact of a stressful death/divorce on psychological and immune outcomes in people with HIV.	Longitudinal N=44  Depression (BDI), Anxiety (state /trait anxiety questionnaire), Social support (INRICH), religious coping (COPE Inventory)	Stressful deaths/divorces were associated with increased viral load and anxiety but not depression over time. Using religious coping frequently after the stressful death/divorce was associated with slower increases in viral load.
12	Reliability and Validity of the Fisher Divorce Adjustment Scale: Japanese and Japanese Short Versions	Yasumitsu, J., & Satoko, A. 2020 Japan	Examining the reliability and validity of the FDAS Japanese (FDAS-J) for use in Japanese populations.	Survey(psychometrics) N= 228  Fisher Divorce Adjustment Scale	men's adjustment levels were lower relative to those of women.

13	Romantic Attachment and Adjustment to Separation: The Role of Forgiveness of the Former Partner	Guzmán-González, M., Wlodarczyk, A., Contreras, P., Rivera-Ottenberger, D., & Garrido, L.  2019 Chile	Examining the mediating role forgiveness of the former partner in adjustment to divorce.	Observational  N=448  Romantic attachment (Experiences in Close Relationships Scale), Forgiveness of the former partner (Questionnaire of Forgiveness in Divorce and Separation), Adjustment to divorce and separation (Psychological Adjustment to Separation Test)	Men generally reported more forgiveness of the former partner than women. Men also reported slightly higher attachment insecurity to the former partner.
14	Chilean Adaptation and Validation of the Fisher Divorce Adjustment Scale–Short Form Mónica	Guzmán-González, M., Garrido, L., Calderón, C., Contreras, P., & Rivera, D.  2017 Chile	determining the psychometric properties of a short version of the Fisher Divorce Adjustment Scale.	Survey  N=128  Fisher Divorce Adjustment Scale	Men reported lower levels of feelings of self-worth, and higher levels on the social trust dimension. Individuals with a current romantic partner obtained higher levels of overall adjustment and more social trust.
15	Romantic Attachment and Adjustment to Divorce and Separation in a Chilean Adult Sample	Garrido Rojas, L., Guzmán-González, M., & Rivera Ottenberger, D.  2016 Chile	Predicting the adjustment to divorce by assessing the romantic attachment, anxiety over abandonment, and avoidance of intimacy.	Cross-sectional  N=95  Experiences in close relationships, Psychological adjustment to separation test, Social Constraints Scale, perceived social support (The Social Provisions Scale), avoidance-related symptoms (The avoidance subscale of the Impact of Event Scale (IES), Breakup Distress (The Breakup Distress Scale), epidemiology of depression in the general population (CES–D scale)	The anxiety over abandonment predicts negative loneliness (feelings of isolation and the experience of weakness and negative affect). It also predicts the persistence of attachment to the ex-partner and the intense desire for emotional closeness (lower adjustment)  No gender difference was found.

16	The impact of social constraints on adjustment following a romantic breakup	Harvey, A. B., & Karpinski, A 2016 US	Assessing the discriminant validity between social constraints and social support and figuring out the additional information concerning the relations that both social constraints and social support have with psychological outcomes	Cross-sectional correlation N=77 Social Constraints Scale, perceived social support (The Social Provisions Scale), avoidance-related symptoms (The avoidance subscale of the Impact of Event Scale (IES)), Breakup Distress (The Breakup Distress Scale), epidemiology of depression in the general population (CES-D scale)	The relationship between break-up distress and depressed mood was strong. The social constraint is positively associated with avoidance behaviors and psychological distress, and negatively correlated with social support.  No gender difference was found.
17	Patterns of psychological adaptation to divorce after a long-term marriage	Perrig-Chiello, P., Hutchison, S., & Morselli, D. 2015 Switzerland	Exploring the psychological adaptation to marital breakup in individuals who have been married for an average of 25 years	Observational N=113 Depression, Hopelessness, Subjective health Mourning (a self-developed item)	The majority of divorcees adapt quite well after the divorce. And only a minority suffer from psychological problems after a marital breakup. Interpersonal resources- especially starting a new relationship- play a significant role in adjustment to divorce. A good adaptation is positively related to lower criticism, higher extroversion, higher resilience and higher openness. Gender plays a marginal role in adaptation.
18	The Portuguese Version of the Psychological Adjustment to Separation Test-Part A (PAST-A): A Study with Recently and Non-recently Divorced Adults	Lamela, D., Figueiredo, B., & Bastos, A 2014 Portugal	Assessing the Validation of the Portuguese version of the Psychological Adjustment to Separation Test-Part A (PAST-A)	Survey(psychometrics) N=130 Portugee version of Adjustment to Separation Test-Part A (PAST-A)	Male experience more loneliness than female. They also report higher score of attachment to the former partners.

19	ADJUSTMENT TO DIVORCE: A COMPARISON OF ETHIOPIAN IMMIGRANT AND ISRAELI-BORN MEN	Kulik, L., & Kasa, Y. A. 2014 Israel	Assessing the adjustment to divorce among Ethiopian emigrant men versus Israeli-born men.	Observational N=112 Adjustment to divorce (Fisher's adjustment to divorce), Quality of the relationship with the ex-spouse, Father's involvement in his children's lives, Perceived informal social support	Israeli-born citizens reported higher score of self-acceptance. They also reported more engagement in their child(ren)'s live. Apart from the nationality, participants with more numbers of children and better self-assessed income, more involvement in their children's lives, higher quality relationship with their ex-spouse reported fewer symptoms of grief.
20	Trajectories of Adjustment to Couple Relationship Separation	Halford, W. K., & Sweeper, S. 2013 Australia	Assessing the adjustment to separation in former married VS former cohabitant male.	Multicohort design N= 133 (104 married and 29 cohabitant) Psychological Adjustment to Separation Test (PAST), Depression, Anxiety, Stress, Experiences in Close Relationships	Cohabitation is related with more loneliness. Fathers reported more coparenting conflict than mothers. Cohabitation is related to more initial loneliness and psychological distress after separation. No significant relationship between marital status and attachment to former partner was found.
21	What if it was all a mistake? Negative thoughts and adjustment to divorce	Yarnoz-Yaben, S. 2013 Spain (bosque)	Analyzing the effect of negative thoughts on various aspects of psychological adjustment and adaptation to divorce of a group of Spanish parents.	Observational N= 13 Demographic Issues Related to Divorce, negative thoughts about post-divorce, Psychological well-being, life satisfaction, Forgiveness towards the ex-partner, Adapting to divorce from the family group	Divorced fathers reported more negative thoughts than divorced mothers. however, the difference was not significant. Fathers with more negative thoughts reported more tendency to use alcohol. Problems related to alcohol and drug abuse are more reported by divorced men. In divorced fathers, the level of negative thoughts after divorce may mediate the divorce-alcohol

22	Impacts of Parents Forever on Parental Behavior and Adjustment During Divorce: A Short-Term Follow-Up Evaluation Study	Brotherson, S. E., Rittenbach, C., & White, J. M. 2012 US	Investigating the perceived usefulness and impacts of a 4-hour divorce education workshop offered to adults.	Longitudinal N=24 Researcher-made attitude questionnaire	Men reported more benefits of participating in an educational session about divorce and parenting.
23	How couples re-organized themselves following divorce: adjustment, co-parenting and family alliance	Togliatti, M. M., Lavadera, A. L., & Benedetto, R. D. 2011 Italy	Understanding family functioning and parental adaptation to divorce.	Multimethod procedure N=68 Separation Adaptation Scale, Co-parenting Scale-revised Clinical Lausanne Trilogue Play	The score of Parental dimensions was similar between fathers and mothers. Fathers were less involved in their children's lives and describe themselves as more emotively distant than mothers. However, fathers felt inclined to implement behaviors designed to evoke the family unit. Moreover, family integrity for fathers was related to the management of both their own emotional aspects and those of the other partner.
24	The Role of Forgiveness in Divorce Adjustment and the Impact of Affect	Rohde-Brown, J., & Rudestam, K. E. 2011 US	Exploring the existence of a relationship between forgiveness and adjustment to divorce and how emotions extend the capacity of forgiveness	Cross-sectional The sample size was not reported for men. Enright Forgiveness Inventory (EFI), the Self Forgiveness Scale (SFS), the Center for Epidemiological Studies–Depression Inventory (CES–D), the Spielberger State-Trait Anger Inventory (STAXI–2), Fisher Divorce Adjustment Scale (FDAS).	Men were more likely to have shared custody or to indicate that their ex-spouse had custody. Men were less likely to experience social support. Men who were more educated had better social support. Divorcees who had lower levels of forgiveness experienced higher levels of depression.

25	Attachment Style and Adjustment to Divorce	Yárnöz-Yaben, S. 2010 Spain	Analyzing the adaptation to divorce as a process of grief from the perspective of attachment theory.	Cross-sectional N=19 Attachment Style (relationship questionnaire), Adjustment to divorce and preoccupation with the ex-spouse, Psychological well-being Dependence (Interpersonal Dependency Inventory)	Divorcees with secure and dismissing attachment styles showed a better adjustment to divorce.
26	Parents' Partnership Decision-Making After Divorce or Widowhood: The Role of (Step) Children	de Jong Gierveld, J., & Merz, E. M. 2013 Netherlands	Exploring the role of children and stepchildren in their personal lifestyles, habits, and households.	Qualitative The sample size was not reported for men. Interview	Men were less likely to be in a lived apart together relationship. Living in an urban area is extremely associated with "lived apart together" relationship. Having two or more children is related to LAT relationships.

the same way, a longitudinal study (Gibb, Fergusson, and Horwood, 2011) has revealed that men are experiencing anxiety, depression, suicidality, alcohol and drug abuse, and the total number of psychiatric disorders the same as women. While some mental health-related issues have been reported after divorce, this study could not show the causal relationship between divorce and mental health problems. Accordingly, a specific study (Ironson, Henry, and Gonzalez, 2020) on divorce among people who were diagnosed with HIV revealed the Stressful divorce caused a considerable increase in viral load and anxiety over time. On the other hand, using religious coping following the stressful divorce was associated with a slower increase in viral load. More specifically about suicidality, the other study (Brassard, St-Laurent Dubé, Gehl, and

Lecomte, 2018) revealed that although the time course of the consequences of separation on suicidality was significantly consistent for both genders, no significant role gender was discovered. Correspondingly, Batterham et al (2014) found that men like women are vulnerable to suicidality after divorce, no matter whether they had children or not, if they had financial issues or did not have. Also, the time course is essentially determinant.

Likewise, Fritzell, Gahler, and Fransson (2020) concluded that in general, both single fathers and mothers experience high levels of worry and anxiety owing to joint physical custody after divorce. For single fathers, socioeconomic factors are more essential than those of single mothers. In contrast, Yárnöz-Yaben, (2013) reported that divorced fathers experienced more negative thoughts and a greater

tendency to use alcohol which is probably caused by alcohol or drug dependency. Such negative consequences are more considerable when the other stressful factors are added. An example of this is mentioned in the study of Kulik and Kasa (2014). They found out that men who experience divorce and migration simultaneously suffer from lower levels of self-acceptance in comparison with men who experience only divorce. Involvement in raising children in immigrant divorced men is less than in native citizens.

Data from the studies show that both genders have difficulties in terms of attachment to the former partners. For example, Yárnoz-Yaben(2010) assessed the influence of gender in the adjustment to divorce and attachment to an ex-spouse and interpersonal dependency. He reported that there was not any significant difference between genders. However, the results showed that people with secure and avoidant attachment styles are closely related to better adjustment. The preoccupied attachment style predicted more negative affectivity though. In contrast, the data driven from another study revealed that divorced men showed more forgiveness and reported slightly higher attachment to former partners (Guzmán-González et al,2019). Similarly, Lamela, Figueiredo and Bastos (2014) in a psychometric study found out that males experienced more loneliness and higher levels of attachment to former partners.

Men's experience of social trust was significantly higher than that of women. In particular, men who had started a new relationship experienced a better total adjustment (Guzmán-González,2017). Similarly, Men have more tendency to share custody or express that their ex-spouse had custody. Besides, it is reported that educated men experience more social support even much more than women (Brown, Rudestam, Erik,2011). However, no significant difference between men and women in the perception of social constraint had found (Rojas, Guzmán-González & Ottenberger, 2016). In this

way, A study (Harvey & Karpinski, 2016) showed that gender did not play a key role in how people experience social constraints and social support. Avoiding dissolution-related thoughts did not relate to the psychological distress of males or females. However, the relation between distress of break-up and depressed mood was strong ( $r = .75, p < .001$ ). In contrast, in another study (Yasumitsu & Satoko, 2020), the levels of disentanglement in men were considerably less than those of women. Similarly, the social self-worth in men was far less than that in women. Moreover, experiencing grief in men was slightly less than that of women. In general, men were far less adjusted to divorce than women. Males tend to use avoidance strategy and open confrontation far more than females. However, no significant gender differences were reported in the indirect manipulation. Moreover, positive tone/self-blame in men is the same as in women (Dong-gwi, 2018).

Post-divorce adjustment is clearly related to the financial situation of men. Moreover, having a liberal attitude toward gender roles helps men to fulfill their responsibility toward their ex-spouse and children without suffering from shame and discomfort. The social support of men is limited to their close friends and is more friendly rather than emotionally (Cheng & Pfeifer, 2015). Opposite findings from the study of Millings (2020) indicated that men show less conscientiousness. In contrast, they are more agreeable and have more emotional intelligence. Besides, they are reluctant to report that they had been initiative for divorce and tend not to report having children. Similarly, A study revealed that there was no significant difference between genders with their ability to form a new relationship, initiation of divorce, and their child's gender. However, having experienced a high conflict divorce can also predict a high conflict co-parenting (Lamela, Figueiredo, Bastos and Feinberg, 2016). One study has revealed that although the presence of children has been decreased the total single

parent's well-being and the younger a child, the more problems, a rate of well-being in fathers is far less than mothers. In contrast, fathers were less struggling with financial issues. However, the consequences of such a decline in well-being is not prolonged and parents with children learn how to adapt to the current state (Thomas, 2016). Spiritual well-being can predict men's higher adjustment to divorce (Steiner, Durand, Groves, & Rozzell, 2015). The majority of individuals divorcing after a long-term marriage adapt successfully over time. Adaptation trajectories depend primarily on intrapersonal resources. However, a minority of divorcees exhibit enduring difficulties. Gender does not play a key role in adjusting to divorce. However, a large number of divorcees after a long-term marital relationship adapt successfully over time. (Knöpfli, Morselli, Perrig-Chiello, 2016). In a study (Schiltz, Ciccarello, Ricci-Boyer, and Schiltz, 2013) men showed a better integration of previous violence, passing through cognitive and artistic elaboration. Another study showed that Resigned ones have experienced a longer former relationship. Gender role is a marginal effect on adjustment to divorce, however, Malcontent behaviors is slightly more in females (Perrig-Chiello, Hutchison and Morselli, 2014)

Divorced father reported more conflicts in co-parenting. In general, men reported more conflict than women. Men who get married after divorce experience less loneliness and psychological distress over time rather than men who chose cohabitation. Moreover, having cohabited is more related to initial loneliness rather than getting married. However, current marital status was not related to attachment to former partner or coparenting conflict (halford and sweeper, 2013).

A study on educating parents for dealing with their children after divorce showed that the amounts of decline in men's negative behavior related to divorce is higher than that of women. Divorce education has more benefits for men (white, 2012)

Fathers are more emotively distant than mothers, however they did not show behaviors which could undermine the mother's authority or credibility. Moreover, they seek more non-parental relationship. [it can make the process of dealing with divorce harder for them]. By contrast, they show more devaluating behavior toward their ex-partner. The fathers who have more parental affections contribute more to organize the family after divorce. Fathers who have better emotional management for themselves and for their former partners provide more family integrity. emotional management and parenting both are antecedents of adjustment to divorce (Togliatti, Lavadera and Benedetto, 2011).

### Discussion

There is a controversy on how men cope with their divorce. In this review, the experience of divorce in men is conceptualized in terms of demographic, child custody, attachment styles, psychological factors, coping strategies (Figure 4). Here, there are factors, based on this scoping review, that affect the process of adjustment to divorce in men.

It seems that the one scope that researchers have been intrigued by is the Demographic features of male divorcees which is proven that have some effects on men adjustment to divorce. A number of studies found that being the initiator of divorce lead to better adjustment, but the rest traced that despite the initiators experiencing a temporary adjustment, after a while, they may suffer from more complicated emotions like guilt and rejection (Brüning, 2022; Fisher, 1977). It seems that people who feel deep anxiety over their relationship, terminate their marriage impulsively or give up saving it. This process could result in a delayed emotional response including the intense feeling of rejection and deep guilt (Harris et al. 2022). The finding of this scoping review reveals that men are usually not the initiators, and their main strategy in marriage conflicts is withdrawal, however, they sometimes use an open confrontation strategy in relationship dissolutions



**Figure 4:** components and dimensions obtained of men's divorce in the studies

(Lee, Sohn, Bae, & Song, 2018). This study also found that the number of previous divorces of a person is not related to their adjustment to the current divorce experience.

Moreover, Post-divorce adjustment is clearly related to the financial situation of men. financial security in stressful life situations can help men to minimize the cumulative effects of family break up and stress and consequently provide them with the effective and functional copings that lead to a better adjustment (Ameto, 2000; Morltman, 2018). Furthermore, A history of fertility helps men to adjust to divorce faster (Tosi & van den Broek, 2020). It seems that parenting brings substantial benefits that result in a better post-divorce adjustment. In particular, having children, the issue of custody and the fundamental effects of custody on divorced father's life allocated a considerable shares of male divorce research.

On the one hand, children are considered as an attachment figure/source for their parents and they meet their divorced parents' emotional needs and add value to their lives (Ferraro, Malespin, Oehme, Bruker, & Opel, 2016). On the other hand, taking parenting responsibilities and remaining involved in children's day-to-day life encourage fathers to overcome the difficulties of divorce and it brings

about well adaptation to divorce. Despite a better financial status being less problematic, custody causes chaos for men (Kessler, 2018). Men have little tendency for getting their children's custody because based on the findings of this scoping review, they introduced themselves as more emotively distant fathers who are less conscientious and experience more anxiety in relationships with their children (Millings, Hirst, Sirois, & Houlston, 2020). It seems that job occupation and fathering responsibilities bring about a seriously challenging situation for fathers, Especially in regard to the poor social support for men, they rarely account for others' support in parenting (Iztayeva, 2021). Moreover, joint custody causes more anxiety for both re-partnered and single fathers because the parenting challenges with the former partner remain unsolved and it results in more anxiety (Fritzell, Gahler, and Fransson, 2020). Therefore, divorce as a serious stressor has many emotional effects on men. Especially, in case of serious marital conflict and divorce initiation by women that put the main burden on men (Hald et al., 2022). The finding reveals that such an emotional wound in addition to self-worth vulnerability, feeling of inadequacy in personal life, perceived failure in marital relationship and ambiguity in planning

future, and the burden of divorce may form anxiety and depression symptoms (Bulut, & Dağtaş, 2022; Hald, et. al, 2022) these experiences in addition to feelings of hopelessness and self-blame may lead to suicidal ideation in male divorcees (Richardson, Robb & O'Connor, 2021). Based on interpersonal-psychological theory of suicidal behavior, feeling abandonment and a sense of not-belonging, perceived being a burden on society and on people, and the vulnerability to self-harm as a capacity for overcoming the fear and pain, are considered as three-factors explanation for suicide (Bryan, et al., 2010). In other words, intense emotions after divorce heads people to the isolation Ameto (2000) which can cause a perception of being a burden.

On the other words, by losing the attachment figure/source, male divorcees confront with emotional dissatisfaction and experience the emotional isolation (Yárnöz-Yaben, 2017). Moreover, family breakdown causes a decline in social network which means male divorcees may stuck in avoidant copings and refuse to get help from others which ends up in social isolation rather than emotional isolation (Bulut, S., & Dağtaş, 2021; 2021). In case they have been experiencing higher levels of attachment insecurity to the former partner, such a sense of alienation would be deeper and bitter. Especially for whom struggled with the anxiety of abandonment. "Internal negative working" and "inaccessible other" models express that divorce causes (Bowlby, 1982 ; Cary, 2000).

Although men are prone to strike relationships or decide about cohabitations, most of these impulsive decisions bring about having fling relationships (Counts, & Reid, 2021). In addition, cohabitation relationships in terms of the lack of serious commitment and ambiguity of intention for marriage lead to more loneliness and chaos (Manning, 2020). Furthermore, attachment is the main theme of emotional reorganization and post-divorce adjustment. Negative points of view about self and others (internal negative working model)

brings about serious sadness and severe depression, feeling of inadequacy, isolation and consequently a sense of alienation (Yárnöz-Yaben, 2017; Diamond, Brimhall, & Elliott,2018 ; Cary, 2000; Fisher, 1977; Fisher & Alberti, 2016).

studies show that men with avoidant attachment styles and/or with secure attachment styles have a better adjustment to divorce (Yárnöz-Yaben, 2010; 2017). It is proven that people with secure attachment styles have a positive point of view due themselves and others; they are also optimistic about the future and have the ability to pass the experience of divorce faster (Guerrero, 2021; Cary, 2000). Oppositely, people with avoidant attachment styles that are specified by negative points of view about themselves and others, are able to cope with the situation they experience after divorce (Guerrero, 2021; Cary, 2000). It happens because they have rarely satisfied their attachment needs in their marriage and they know themselves as people who are comfortable with having no relationship (Diamond, Brimhall, & Elliott,2018 ).

On the other hand, people with anxious attachment styles who are known for their preoccupation with relationships and having negative points of view about themselves and positive ones about others, are difficulty adjusting to divorce (Guerrero, 2021 ; Cary, 2000). They reported more signs and symptoms of anxiety and depression and they suffer from more suicidal ideations than people with other attachment styles (Gibb, Fergusson, & Horwood, 2011). It seems that due to such a negative point of view about the self, the process of the unfortunate incident of divorce is lengthened for them (Yárnöz-Yaben, 2017).

So, male divorcees struggle with a range of negative emotions after divorce that in addition to activation of insecure attachment structures, affect on the points of view about self and others, which demands using coping strategies for adjustment (Diamond, Brimhall, & Elliott,2018 ). Since support as a key interpersonal resource provides a

capacity for distress management and integration that caused better adjustment to divorce (Garrido Rojas, Guzmán-González, & Rivera Ottenberger, 2016). Oppositely, social constraints are related to more avoidant behaviors because most divorcees feel a lack of self-worth or experience worthlessness (Davarinejad, et al., 2022). In case they experience social constraints, they may avoid others to protect their selves.

Since the last stage of adjustment to divorce is starting a new relationship, divorcees who strike a relationship in time can easily deal with the bitter emotional experience of divorce (Whisman, Salinger, & Sbarra, 2022; Cabilar, & Yılmaz, 2022). The finding of this scoping review showed that divorced men who start a new relationship have a better adjustment level (Perrig-Chiello, Hutchison, & Morselli, 2015). This is because forging a secure relationship helps people to satisfy their emotional and attachment needs. However, this finding is not applicable to divorcees who prefer a cohabitation relationship. As men have more benefits in marital relationships, they rarely prefer a Live Together apart (LAT) relationship (de Jong Gierveld, & Merz, 2013).

As well, Men diagnosed with HIV who used religious copings after divorce showed lower viral load. This finding is associated with the other findings (e.g. Asanjarani, Guzmán-González, & Etemadi, 2021; Krumrei, Mahoney, & Pargament, 2011; Krumrei, Mahoney, & Pargament, 2009). This may conclude that attachment to God as an attachment figure helps people to a better adjustment.

Since the divorce is a stressful life transformation process (Crabtree, S. A., & Harris, 2020) with serious financial, health-related, and psychological consequences for both divorcees, it seems that they need to adjust to life after divorce to minimize the aftereffects. A number of studies show that there is no difference between genders in terms of adjustment to divorce (ie Tosi, M., & van den Broek, 2020). Oppositely, a great share of studies confirm that

men's adjustment to divorce is lower than women's (Yasumitsu, & Satoko, 2020). Fortunately, most divorcees are acceptably adapted to divorce during two years. However, a limited number of them suffer from maladjustment (Hald, et al; Perrig-Chiello, P., Hutchison, S., & Morsell, 2015)

### **Study Strengths and Limitations**

This study is the only one of its kind regarding divorced men and father in the last decade to the best of our knowledge. Despite the use of measures to maintain high levels of rigor in our process, some limitations can be noted. A more holistic picture of men's experience following divorce would have benefited from the inclusion of social science databases as well. It would have also been beneficial to look at popular media and other gray literature such as key journals. Also extending interval time search until now is important. Time limited the ability to evaluate either.

one of our strengths is all of stage of search done by two reviewers have been beneficial in reducing biases in the evaluation process. Also, the systematic search strategy developed by hands of expertise helped the precision and adequacy of syntax. Moreover, Search of three main databases may help to include more studies to ensure a comprehensive data search.

Bottom (2013)'s review is the use of a single database to search for and collect publications for review. Suggested the addition of one or more supplementary databases might very well have increased the number of publications for inclusion.

### **Future research suggestions**

It is suggested that researchers focus on:

- The relationship between SES, the causes of divorce, the perceived stress before and during divorce, and the effects of divorce on people with severe symptoms of chronic illnesses
- Observation, formulation, and conceptualization of adaptive and maladaptive coping strategies chosen by men due to finding out the range of coping strategies they use, the priority of them and the effect

of both adaptive and maladaptive coping strategies on men's mental health.

- more precise research on financial situation of men after divorce is suggested too. For example, exploration on men's housing, financial problem-solving, and the way they build up support.
- the effects of economic depression and post-COVID-19 job market on divorced men.
- emotional consequences of father's deprivation of visiting their children after divorce for both divorced fathers and their children aren't conceptualized yet.
- considering a great number of studies on fathers' custody, conducting a systematic review and meta-analysis on this topic is highly suggested.
- the role of spirituality as a social not personal coping of divorced men is vaguely formulated. It seems that more studies in different cultures are needed.

It is recommended to conduct a more detailed and in-depth study on men from the perspective of attachment styles and disturbances caused by attachment damage and the strategies of each to heal attachment wounds.

- going through the process of divorce in men with different attachment styles are not clearly conceptualized. It is suggested that researchers focus on the methods that divorced men applied to cope with divorce and find their way to remarriage.
- scholars could be neglecting important constructs for understanding family systems and how fathers might be affected by the construction of those specific systems. Attention to applied and participatory research values and a commitment to divorced fathers' wellness provide relevant forums in which to address the needs of divorced fathers.

The results of this scoping review revealed that a great number of studies have been conducted on developed countries. It is strongly suggested that researchers of other nations dedicate time and effort on the study of divorce as it is a cultural phenomenon and may differ from a country to the other.

- Social consequences of divorce for men are not clearly postulated. Such an experience affects every

aspect of life. So, it is suggested that the social consequences of divorce be observed, categorized and conceptualized.

## Conclusion

The present study evaluated the men's divorce. Despite the limited literature, this study identified factors and components for the experience of divorce in men. The results obtained from the review of 26 studies could be exploited by psychotherapists and counselors to realize men's divorce factors. This allows for designing educational package and intervention to diminish negative impacts of the divorce in men.

Indeed, to perform complementary research and to extend the findings, more extensive and deeper studies with qualitative or hybrid methodologies are recommended to further investigate men's divorce in different contexts. The knowledge provided by the present work and complementary studies would be helpful in taking effective and cost-efficient steps toward the design and development of men's adjustment of divorce programs in different contexts.

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