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THE EFFECT OF SEXUAL PROBLEMS IN DIVORCE PROCESS:
CASES OF MEN (TURKEY)BOŞANMA SÜRECİNE CİNSEL PROBLEMLERİN ETKİSİ: ERKEK
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ABSTRACT

This research aims to shed light on the perspective of men towards the divorce process in Turkey and the effect of sexual problems on the decision to divorce. According to the men who participated in the study, the two most important problems leading to divorce is indifference by their wives and not meeting their expectations (emotional, sexual vs.). The next most important problem is jealousy/pressure by wife, and the final is sexual problems. Significant differences were detected in the breakdown of the scale among men who believe sexual problems affect marriage and sexuality is regarded as a problem in marriage as well as seeing it as a reason for divorce. Consequently, the report concludes that men who are in the process of divorce experience sexual problems as revealing in most of the sub-factors of sexual satisfaction level.

Keywords: Divorce, premature ejaculation, impotence, family therapy, sexual problem

ÖZET

Bu çalışmanın amacı, boşanma sürecindeki erkeklere göre cinsel sorunların boşanmaya etkisinin Türkiye örnekleminde incelemektir. Çalışmaya katılan erkeklere göre, boşanmaya yol açan en önemli iki sorun eşlerinin ilgisizliği ve beklentilerini karşılayamama (duygusal, cinsel vs.) dir. Diğer önemli sorun ise, eşin baskısı veya kıskançlığı ve son olarak da cinsel sorunlardır. Erkekler cinsel sorunların evliliği etkilediğine ve cinselliğin evlilikte hem bir sorun hem de boşanma nedeni olarak görmekte ve ölçeğin alt faktörleri arasında anlamlı bir fark belirlenmiştir. Sonuç olarak, çalışmanın sonuçları boşanma sürecindeki erkelerde cinsel doyumun düşük olmasının boşanma ile ilişkisi olduğunu ortaya koymaktadır.

Anahtar kelimeler; Boşanma, erken boşalma, iktidarsızlık, aile terapisi, cinsel sorunlar

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INTRODUCTION

Family is the primary social institution of socialization, the role of which is to build social order and balance. The concept of this primary institution has changed throughout history, in line with social changes, and has undertaken new functions at different times. Particularly, problems emerging during industrialization (in industrialized countries) and its associated, rapid social changes had and continue to exert a strong and direct effect on the family structure. In this context, family structure is composed of behavioral patterns accepted and continuously repeated by its members which ensure and regulate interaction among these family members. Family structure differs depending on many variables such as family bonds, social attitudes in the region where they live, reaction to social change, financial conditions and cultural features (Gottman & Levenson, 2000). The most important functions provided by family and marriage relations are emotional, social, psychical, sexual, economic benefits and providing continuance to lineage (Gülsün, Ak, & Bozkurt, 2009).

One of the basic functions of spousal relations in the family is fulfilling the sexual needs of each. Humankind is born with sexual drive and basically lives by instincts of love and sexual drive. Therefore, it is necessary to satisfy these instincts. Love and sexuality are the most important factors that bind spouses together and ensure the continuity of the family unit. However, love and sexuality are not the only factors that continue the marriage and other factors must accompany to ensure satisfaction (Kayser, 1993).

The primary physical and psychological need for individuals is love and physical intimacy (sexual intercourse). It is believed that the most important source of motivation for building and sustaining a relationship is love and sexuality (Morokoff & Gilliland, 1993). In this regard, love and sexuality are complementary values gaining meaning when they are present together in marriage. Therefore, love and sexuality in marriage mutually and proportionately satisfy emotional needs (Kayser, 1993).

Sexual satisfaction by spouses creates the need for assuring their marriage relations. (Kersten, 1990). Furthermore, problems in a couple's sexual intercourse (sexual incompatibility and sexual dysfunctions) have consequences. They lower expectations of the marriage, damage the skills used in the struggle against and resolution of family problems, and they reduce the pleasure in marriage and the peace and quality of whatever sexual intercourse does take place (Öztürk & Arkar, 2014). Although there are many factors leading to divorce, low sexual satisfaction is considered to be an important one, and it is therefore significant to investigate sexual satisfaction in depth.

Divorce risk factors include teenage marriage, premarital cohabitation, poverty, unemployment, parental divorce, infidelity, alcohol and drug abuse, weak marital commitment, high levels of conflict, and domestic violence (Bahr, 2016). And though there is relatively scant mention of it in the literature, sexual problems are also a risk factor for divorce. For instance, it has been estimated that 50% of American marriages have some sexual problems (Glick, et al., 2016).

While it is true that there are few studies investigating in general the effect of sexual problems on divorce, it is also significant – and should be noted separately – that there is also limited research on the specific issue of sexual problems and marriage from the perspective of men. Thus, the main objective of this study is to understand the divorce process from the perspective of men as well as the factors contributing to this process.

Severe sexual problems in marriage affect the relationship between spouses and directly or indirectly lead to divorce in modern families. Sexual problems are considered to be a significant reason behind divorces. Since sexual issues and problems, and sexuality in general, are taboos in our social structure, there is an inclination to avoid questioning these issues. Sexuality always presents as a private issue. Therefore, its effect on divorce is not precisely known. Moreover, there is not any study in the literature focusing on this area from the perspective of men. This study, thus, is essential since it will reveal the effect of sexuality, sexual life and sexual problems on divorce particularly with regard to men. Results of the study will constitute a significant source of light shed on this area.

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MATERIALS AND METHODS

Data and Samples

This research is designed on the basis of the relational screening model. Approximately 300 men in the divorce process were interviewed. In these interviews, most of the participants chose not fill out the interview form since they felt the topic was private, they were shy, or they did not want to share their ideas in this regard. Uncompleted interview forms were excluded, leaving 70 participants with full forms to complete the study. In line with the purpose of the study, participants were required to fill out interview forms. The first section of the form included socio-demographic data (age, educational level, year of marriage, number of children, place of residence, social security, number of past marriages, etc.), the second section included questions on the participants' opinions on sexual life in their marriage, and the third section applied the Golombok Rust Inventory of Sexual Satisfaction (GRISS)

Golombok-Rust Inventory of Sexual Satisfaction (GRISS)

The GRISS is a short 28-item questionnaire for assessing the existence and severity of sexual problems. The design, construction, and item analysis of the GRISS are described in this study. It is shown to have high reliability and good validity for both the overall scales and the sub-scales (Rust & Glombok 1983).

The GRISS male form is a measuring tool for assessing the nature of sexual relations and sexual dysfunctions which is used in this study. Under the 28 items of the GRISS male form, there are 7 sub-scales which are the frequency of sexual intercourse, communication, satisfaction, avoidance and sensuality, premature ejaculation and impotence (erectile dysfunction). While high scores indicate sexual dysfunction and deterioration in the quality of intercourse, raw scores may be later turned into standard scores between 1 and 9 (5 is the breakpoint) and since scores of 5 or above are defined as sexual dysfunction or deterioration of the intercourse, participants receiving 5 and above are referred to as the "problematic group" while others receiving less scores lower than 5 are referred to as the "problem-free group".

Data was obtained in May- August, 2017. Data obtained in the study was analyzed by SPSS 21.00. In addition, descriptive statistical analyses (frequency, percentage distribution, average values, standard deviation) and correlation analyses were conducted in line with the purpose of the study.

RESULTS

Demographic Characteristics

It was determined that 42.9% of the men participating in the study, who are divorced or in the divorce process, completed undergraduate education, while 10% received master's degree and 81.5% live in urban areas. 87.1% of the males live in nuclear families, and 40% of them were not married with children, 28.6% have 1 child, and 22.9% of the males have 2 children. In addition, it is detected that they stayed married for minimum 1 year and maximum 35 years with an average of 8 years.

61.4% of the males married after flirting/companion period, while 17.1% had arranged marriage (without coercion), and 8.6% got married after premarital cohabitation, 4.3% had a consanguineous marriage, 4.3% married without permission from their parents and 4.3% had an arranged marriage due to social pressure or pressure from relatives. 11.4% of the males have consanguineous marriage, while the rest 88.6% did not prefer consanguineous marriage. Indeed, consanguineous marriage is an on-going phenomenon in rural areas. Yet, it is gradually losing its effect in urban areas.

Views on Divorce and Sexuality

It was observed that 77.1% of the males did not attempt to current divorce, while 22.9% did. Accordingly, 58.6% of the males stated they were the one to initiate the divorce, while it is also stated that this rate is close to the rate of their wives. In addition, 54.3% of those who applied to court for divorce were males while the rate of application by their partners was 45.7%. According to the males who decided to divorce themselves, 27.1% of the partners reacted with anger, 11.4% remained unresponsive, 8.6% rejected divorce, and 4.3% reacted by threatening their husbands. In case where the wife was the one to decide to divorce, the reactions of

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the males were also scrutinized. In this regard, 10% of the males sought help from their close relatives and friends, 7.1% left home and remained unresponsive at the same rate, while 5.7% rejected divorce. 58.3% of the males, on the other hand, did not want to answer this question.

The factors affecting the decision to divorce according to men were analyzed, and it was observed that 67.1% said the reason was their partner's indifference and failure in fulfilling their expectations, 40% held that the reason for divorce was jealousy/pressure from the partner, 37% stated sexual problems, 35.7% pointed to the existence of someone outside the nuclear family at home, 32.9% stated financial problems (poverty, unemployment, etc.), 27.1% mentioned interference by parents, 11.4% mentioned alcohol, gambling and other harmful habits, and 7.1% referred to other reasons for their divorce (Table 1).

Table 1: Reasons for Divorce according to Males

Reasons	<i>n</i>	%
<i>Indifference and failure in fulfilling expectations</i>	47	67.1
<i>Jealousy/pressure from the partner</i>	28	40.0
<i>Sexual problems</i>	26	37.1
<i>Having someone outside the nuclear family at home</i>	25	35.7
<i>Financial problems, unemployment</i>	23	32.9
<i>Interference by parents</i>	19	27.1
<i>Alcohol, gambling and other harmful habits</i>	8	11.4
<i>Other</i>	5	7.1

Note: Multiple options are marked.

18.6% of the males stated that sexual problems had a negative effect on their marriage, while 41.1% said these problems had a partially negative effect on their marriage, 11.4 were not sure and 24.3% said that their marriage was not affected at all. 22.9% of the males found their sexual life satisfactory, 34.3% partially satisfactory and 18.6% found that their sexual life in marriage was not satisfactory at all. 11.4% of the males said that they forced their partners to perform sexual intercourse, 51.4% stated their partners rejected sexual intercourse and 81.4%, on the other hand, uttered that they rejected their partners' desire for sexual intercourse.

22.9% of the males stated that problems of sexual compatibility in their marriage completely disrupted their marital adjustment, 44.3% said these problems partially damaged marital adjustment, and 28.6% said problems of sexual compatibility did not have any negative effect in their marital adjustment (Table 2).

Analyzing the responses with regard to the factors that have a negative effect on sexual life in marriage, it was observed that 57.1% of the males marked falling out of love, 30% partner's unattractiveness, 22.9% physical incapacity, 25.7% cheating, 25.7% partner's poor-groomed appearance, 20% sexual incompatibility and ignorance with regard to sexuality, and 4.3% marked violence as one of the factors affecting their sexual life (Table 2).

12.9% of the males regarded sexual problems as a reason for divorce, while 31.4% stated that they deemed sexual problems partially responsible for divorce, 11.4% were not sure, and 41.4% stated they they absolutely do not see sexual problems as a reason for divorce (Table 2).

When analyzing the feelings of men, whose marriage is over or about to end, towards their partners, it is observed that they are disappointed, nervous, shocked, regretful, angry, hateful, and fearful (Table 3).

When evaluating their feelings towards the divorce process or ending the marriage, 50% of the males stated that they are disappointed, 32.9% are happy, 32.9% are nervous, 25.7% are angry, 24.3% are regretful, 21.4% are shocked, 15.7% are hateful, and 5.7% are fearful (Table 3).

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Table 3: Distribution by feelings towards the partner and divorce/ending marriage

General feelings towards the partner	<i>n</i>	%
<i>Disappointment</i>	43	61.4
<i>Nervousness</i>	25	35.7
<i>Shock</i>	21	30.0
<i>Regret</i>	20	28.6
<i>Anger</i>	19	27.1
<i>Hate</i>	10	14.3
<i>Happiness</i>	10	14.3
<i>Fear</i>	3	4.3
Feelings towards divorce or ending marriage		
<i>Disappointment</i>	35	50.0
<i>Nervousness</i>	23	32.9
<i>Happiness</i>	23	32.9
<i>Anger</i>	18	25.7
<i>Regret</i>	17	24.3
<i>Shock</i>	15	21.4
<i>Hate</i>	11	15.7
<i>Fear</i>	4	5.7

91.4% of the males participating in the study stated that they did not receive any sexual education in the premarital period or during marriage. In addition, 65.7% stated that marriage age does not affect sexuality. It was determined that 27.1% of the males believed that divorce is a negative incident, while 22.9% believed it is good, 25.7% were at ease, and 20% felt positive after divorce.

Results of Sexual Satisfaction Levels

When the sub-factors of the GRISS are scrutinized in terms of the males within the scope of this research, it is observed that they do not experience problems with regard to the frequency of sexual intercourse mean value ($M= 3.81$, $SD= 1.31$) or communication problems according to communication sub-factor mean value ($M= 4.62$, $SD= 2.12$). However, it is determined that they have low level of sexual satisfaction since the sexual satisfaction sub-factor mean value is high ($M= 7.82$, $SD= 1.73$). According to the avoidance sub-factor mean value ($M= 3.32$, $SD= 2.60$), the rate of avoidance by the males from sexual life is low. Since the sensuality sub-factor mean value ($M= 9.91$, $SD= 2.17$) is high, it is observed that level of sensuality is low in their sexual life. Finally, it was determined that the males experienced premature ejaculation problems in their sexual intercourse according to the premature ejaculation sub-factor mean value ($M= 6.21$, $SD= 1.74$) as well as experiencing the problem of impotence as a result of high impotence sub-factor mean value ($M= 7.77$, $SD= 2.08$).

In the correlation analysis of the GRISS sub-factors, it is determined that there is a negative and significant relation between the sub-factors of avoidance and communication as well as a negative and significant relation between the sub-factors of avoidance and sensuality. On the other hand, there is a positive and significant relation between the sub-factors of premature ejaculation and frequency of sexual intercourse in addition to the positive and significant relation between impotence and frequency of sexual intercourse. Furthermore, positive and significant relation is detected between the sub-factors of impotence and avoidance as well as impotence and sensuality (Table 4).

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Table 4: Correlations Among the GRISS Variables

		GRISS 1	GRISS 2	GRISS 3	GRISS 4	GRISS 5	GRISS 6	GRISS 7
GRISS 1	Correlation	1						
	P value							
GRISS 2	Correlation	,209	1					
	P value	,082		1				
GRISS 3	Correlation	-,008	,199					
	P value	,949	,099	-,173				
GRISS 4	Correlation	-,054	-,415**	,152	1			
	P value	,657	,000	,100				
GRISS 5	Correlation	,228	,115	,412	-,265*	1		
	P value	,058	,342	-,012	,026			
GRISS 6	Correlation	,246*	,194	,924	-,178	,226	1	
	P value	,040	,107	-,023	,140	,060		
GRISS 7	Correlation	,302*	-,098	,850	,310**	,334**	,169	1
		,011	,419		,009	,005	,162	

Note: GRISS 1: Frequency of sexual intercourse, GRISS 2: Communication, GRISS 3: Satisfaction, GRISS 4: Avoidance, GRISS 5: Sensuality, GRISS 6: Premature Ejaculation, GRISS 7: Erectile dysfunction

*, Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed), **. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Divorce is a process these stages are respectively: the emotional divorce, legal divorce, economic divorce, family divorce, social divorce, and finally psychological divorce (Bohannon, 1973). The first stage is emotional divorce, followed by legal divorce. Therefore, it is believed that professional support in these first two steps may ease the resolution of problems.

Most of the participants did not receive professional help (family therapist) in the divorce process, and those who did receive professional help preferred to apply to a family therapist. Family therapy services in Turkey are provided by private centers or local governments and public institutions in Turkey. Local governments and particularly the Ministry of Family and Social Services provide this service free of charge. Nevertheless, it is observed that families experiencing problems are not sufficiently benefiting from these services.

The majority of the males (58.6%) in this study stated that they decided to divorce and filed the divorce application. It is not surprising in our country, which is endowed with a patriarchal gender-based cultural structure, that it is the males who first decide to divorce and apply to the judicial authorities. From this perspective, it is observed from the responses given to the question, "What was your reaction when (if) your wife decided to divorce?" that the majority of the males sought help from their friends or close relatives followed respectively by leaving home, remaining unresponsive, and rejecting the divorce. In another study, almost all cases (98.7%) revealed that it was the males who decided to divorce and 51.3% of their spouses reacted by 'resisting divorce' (Morokoff & Gilliland, 1993). According to the men who decided to divorce, their spouses reacted with anger, frustration and crying, leaving home, remaining unresponsive, rejecting the divorce, and threatening their husbands. These men indicated that the reasons for divorce were respectively as follows: indifference by the spouse and failure to meet their expectations, jealousy/pressure, sexual problems, having somebody else at home, financial problems, interference by parents,

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and harmful habits such as alcohol abuse or gambling. According to the males participating in the research, sexual problems were the third leading factor resulting in divorce. Furthermore, among the reasons for divorce stated by men who participated in Kaya's (2016) study was end of enthusiasm, which is understood as reluctance due to repeated use of the same sexual object.

Although the concept of divorce is still seen as taboo in Turkey and divorce proceedings are rather challenging, many couples apply to family courts for divorce. As is purported in a study conducted by Sevim (et al., 2016), as divorce rates are increasing year by year, it is commonly observed that families do not respond to divorce as harshly as before, and some families even support their children in divorce. As a matter of fact, the number of families contributing to the decision to divorce is very high. Furthermore, the new legal regulation allows divorced people to write "single" under the 'marital status' section in their identity cards. In this context, a significant increase has been observed in divorce rates in recent years.

Analyzing the factors affecting sexual life in marriage according to men, it is found that quarrels between spouses are the first reason for negative impact on sexual life, which are followed respectively by falling out of love, unattractiveness of the spouse, his own or his wife's physical incapacity, cheating, poorly groomed spouse, sexual incompatibility, violence, and lack of information about sexuality (Table 2). One of the primary factors having a negative impact on the sexual life of spouses is quarrels and falling out of love. In other words, it may well be argued that continuous quarrels and falling out of love bring along sexual problems and a negative impact on sexual intercourse. Similarly, sexual problems, in turn, might lead to more quarrels between the spouses as well as falling out of love.

From this perspective, nearly half of the men regard sexual problems as the cause of divorce, while two-fifths absolutely reject the idea that sexual problems are a reason for divorce (Table 2). And a low rate of them stated that they are not sure about this issue. In their study, Guatam and Batra (1996) revealed that gender-related factors and sexual dysfunctions are associated with divorce-seeking behaviors. The results of this study, as well, express that men have sexual problems in their marriage, and this is an important factor in divorce. In this respect, the study reveals the importance of family therapy and giving adequate information about the management of sex and sexual dysfunctions.

Table 2: Reasons for sexual problems in marriage according to males

Factors	n	%
Disputes	48	68,6
Falling out of love	40	57.1
Partner is not attractive	21	30.0
Cheating	18	25.7
Partner is not well-groomed	18	25.7
Sexual problems (dysfunction)	16	22.9
Lack of information on sexual-ity	14	20.0
Sexual incompatibility	14	20.0
Pregnancy/Delivery	11	15.7
Economic Problems	11	15.7
Incompatible physical conditions at home	9	12.9

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<i>Crowded family</i>	8	11.4
<i>Too much care for children</i>	7	10.0
<i>Alcohol and substance abuse</i>	7	10.0
<i>Physical illnesses</i>	6	8,6
<i>Not being an attractive male</i>	5	7.1
<i>Taboos on sexuality</i>	5	7.1
<i>Violence</i>	3	4.3
<i>I do not know</i>	2	2,9
<i>Other</i>	2	2.9
<i>Whether sexual problems are seen as disagreements in marriage</i>	<i>Whether sexual problems are seen as disagreements in marriage</i>	<i>Whether sexual problems are seen as disagreements in marriage</i>
Yes	8	11,4
Yes, partially	31	44,3
I am not sure	8	11.4
No	20	28.6
<i>Whether sexuality is seen as a reason for divorce</i>	<i>Whether sexuality is seen as a reason for divorce</i>	<i>Whether sexuality is seen as a reason for divorce</i>
Yes	9	12.9
Yes, partially	22	31.4
I am not sure	8	11.4
No	29	

Note: Multiple options are marked.

Results of this study pertaining to the GRISS sub-factor values of the men indicate that the males participating in the study do not experience problems in frequency of sexual intercourse and communication, yet their sexual satisfaction is deduced to be low due to the high mean value of the sexual satisfaction sub-factor. According to a survey conducted in 12 countries including Turkey, 84% of men and 74% of women believe that the most important element of sexual self-confidence for men is to satisfy their wives in sexual terms. In couples with sexual dysfunction, marital adjustment is poor and sexual satisfaction levels are low (Öztürk & Arkar, 2018).

In the correlation analysis of the GRISS sub-factors, a negative and significant relationship was detected between sexuality avoidance and communication sub-factors. Accordingly, the level of avoidance from sexual intercourse increases as communication between spouses on sexuality diminishes. In other words, couples tend to communicate less when there are sexual problems and correspondingly, the level of avoidance of sexual intercourse increases or contrarily, the level of communication (verbal, body language, physical contact, and implicit messages) increases to share sexual desires as avoidance of sexual intercourse increases. This fact proves that men are experiencing problems in their sexual life and the above equations may well be interpreted as indicators of men's sexual problems in marriage.

The high mean value of the sensuality sub-factor reveals that the males who participated in the study had a severe

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problem of physical contact in their sexual life. Furthermore, this sub-factor revealed as the highest mean value among all the other sub-factors in the GRIS. As a matter of fact, sensuality is the most important initiating element in sexual intercourse.

In the correlation analysis between sensuality and avoidance sub-factors, a negative and significant relationship was found. In this respect, as men avoid sexual intercourse, the level of physical contact with their spouses decreases as well. In other words, men tend to avoid sexual intercourse as they experience problems in their sexual life (e.g. impotence, premature ejaculation, or infertility which causes the feeling of being insufficient) and as a result, their level of sensuality and physical contact with spouses decreases. Emotional bond as well as sensuality and physical contact are critical in sexual intercourse and these factors constitute the trigger of this process while increasing satisfaction level.

The frequency of sexual intercourse is the most important indicator of satisfaction level in sexual life for men. In this context, the problem of premature ejaculation may result from cognitive or organic reasons. To the same degree as sexual compatibility and satisfaction, premature ejaculation may lead to perception of men as impotent and thus, physically incapable. Henceforth, premature ejaculation must absolutely be examined and treated with either medical therapy or cognitive intervention. In other words, premature ejaculation may lead to a strong feeling of impotence and shame in men and as the problem of premature ejaculation continues, men feel more embarrassed and start to avoid sexual intercourse in order to mask their impotence, which leads to a decrease in the frequency of sexual intercourse.

The fact that the impotence sub-factor mean value is high indicates that men have impotence problems. According to the impotence sub-factor mean value the males participating in this study experienced impotence problems in their sexual intercourse. As a matter of fact, the problem of impotence can be a very serious concern for men. On the other hand, performance anxiety, extramarital relationships accompanied by feelings of guilt, sexual dysfunctions in the partner, various sexual myths, exaggerated expectations and problems between husband and wife may also lead to impotence (Ekmekcioğlu & Demirtaş, 2006). McCabe (2008) refers to the fact that men who have impotence problems often find that their marriage dynamics start to become dysfunctional over time. In other words, as the problem of impotence deepens, it is reflected in other dynamics of the marriage as well.

In the correlation analysis between impotence and frequency of sexual intercourse, a positive and significant relationship was determined. Similarly, men who have impotence problems also suffer from problems in terms of frequency of sexual intercourse. As men suffer more and more from impotence, they tend to feel incompetent, useless and ashamed. To avoid shame and stigmatization, they try to avoid sexual intercourse as much as possible, which gradually reduces the frequency of sexual intercourse. In this regard, the need for sexual intercourse in spousal relations can be satisfied only through mutual contribution. As men avoid sexual intercourse, they are chased by their wives and after a certain period of time, conflicts emerge between the spouses, which turn into a reason for divorce if this problem is not solved. As stated before, the frequency of sexual intercourse decreases as men experience premature ejaculation and impotence problems, while the frequency of sexual intercourse increases as this problem decreases.

In the correlation analysis between impotence and avoidance, a positive and significant relationship was identified in addition to the positive and significant relationship between impotence and sensuality. This result reveals that men avoid sexual intercourse when they experience impotence, and also physical contact – or, in other words, sensuality. Rosenheim and Neuman (1981) point out the fact that men with sexual dysfunction experience more interpersonal anxiety, and anger is rather prominent (Rosenheim and Neuman, 1981), which suggests that depressive symptoms increase in individuals with sexual problems (Quinta Gomes et al., 2011). The importance of professional support appears at this stage.

The results of a study in Iran demonstrated the relatively high prevalence of sexual dysfunction among men, and unfortunately, the fact that most of them did not seek help for their sexual problems (Charandabi et al., 2015). Hisli Şahin et al. (2012) conducted a study which resulted in men with sexual dysfunction having significantly higher scores than all the other sub-scales except for the “sensuality” sub-scale and GRISS total score compared to the control group.

In addition to whether spouses respond to each other's sexual needs in marriage, the way they respond to these needs is also critical for sexual life (Youn, 2009). Shakeriana (et al., 2014) found in their study a significant negative correlation between marital problems and sexual satisfaction. In other words, as sexual satisfaction increases, marital problems decrease in parallel, while decreased sexual satisfaction leads to more problems in marriage. Therefore, it is observed that sexual satisfaction is an important function in preventing marital problems.

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In light of this information, a significant relation is found between seeing sexual problems as a source of disagreement and the sub-factors of communication avoidance and impotence. According to this result, it can be uttered that men see sexual problems as a source of disagreement and problems of impotence, avoidance and communication, indeed, are accepted as reasons for quarrels.

In this line, a significant relation is found between seeing sexual compatibility problems as a source of marital problems and the sub-factors of communication, avoidance, and frequency of sexual intercourse. According to this result, it is possible to argue that men see sexual problems as a source of disagreement in marriage and experience problems of frequency of sexual intercourse, avoidance and communication which they deem as reasons for damaging the marital harmony. In addition to avoidance, lack of communication with regard to sexual life, and too frequent or infrequent sexual intercourse may be argued to cause conflicts in marriage as well.

In summary, the results of this study demonstrate that men who are in the divorce process do not experience problems in terms of frequency of sexual intercourse, however this frequency does not have a positive effect on sexual satisfaction. In other words, their sexual intercourse is not satisfactory since physical contact and sensuality is inadequate, and they face the premature ejaculation problem. Due to these reasons, it is revealed that they experience the problem of impotence. Although men present sexual problems as the third reason for divorce, the results of this scale indicate that their sexual life is not satisfactory, they do not physically contact their wives much, and have premature ejaculation and impotence problems. In other words, it may be argued that low sexual satisfaction and other sexual problems in marriage have an impact on divorce when the sampling of the males in the divorce process who participated in this study are taken into consideration. Recommendations provided in line with these results of the study are given below.

There is a clear need for cooperation between experts from different disciplines (psychiatrist, social worker, psychologist, sexual therapist, divorce lawyer) in the solution of sexual dysfunction and incompatibility problems (Maccabee et al., 2017).

It is of vital importance for judges of family courts to refer divorcing couples to a family therapist and ensure that they decide whether to divorce or not after this therapy. This process must be managed systematically and in a sustainable manner. Furthermore, the Ministry of Family, Labor and Social Services can create funding to cover therapy fees of couples referred to family therapy.

It is important in terms of strengthening the family to train couples via individual and group studies with regard to marriage, sexuality, communication, empathy, and parenthood with micro and mezzo interventions.

There is a need for comprehensive sexuality research (particularly with couples who applied to family courts). Sexual education programs should be provided systematically and regularly to couples with marriage plans by focusing on taboos, views and approaches, deficient or misinformation on marriage and sex. Such training activities should be carried out under government control as an obligation and provided free of charge.

It is further recommended to investigate this issue with a larger study group in order to contribute to the literature and create a source for future studies.

Limitations

It was planned to collect data from the males who had applied for divorce to Istanbul Anatolian Courthouse, however the permission given to carry out the study was later cancelled. Before cancellation, 15 male participants were interviewed. Although the Ministry of Justice authorized this study, it was a significant limitation that authorities at Istanbul Anatolian Courthouse did not grant permission.

Another important limitation was perception of sexuality as a private issue and taboo, which prevented access to men who are divorced or in divorce process. In addition, another limitation was that 230 out of 300 males did not accept to take part in the research.

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