## Study shows divorces rates rise when people have more potential mates to choose from

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A pair of researchers at Stockholm University has found that people who have a lot of co-workers of the opposite gender might have a higher risk of divorce. In their paper published in the journal Biology Letters, Caroline Uggla and Gunnar Andersson describe their study of heterosexual men and women living in Denmark over a 20-year period,
and what they found.

There are, of course, a lot of factors that contribute to the success of a marriage. In this new effort, the researchers suggest one might be the degree of availability of other options. They carried out a study to learn more about factors that might contribute to the success or failure of marriages. It involved gaining access to and analyzing data on people living in Denmark over the years 1981 to 2002. They narrowed their focus to married heterosexual males and females who held jobs during that time span. They compared divorce rates between people in different occupations.

The researchers found a trend-people who worked with a high ratio of co-workers of the opposite gender had higher divorce rates than those who did not. They noted the increase was most pronounced with men, and in particular, men with more education. Interestingly, for women with more education, there was no increase. The research did not uncover reasons for these trends, but the researchers offer some possibilities-such as men being more attracted to people with similar education and job interests. They note also that simply being around more women likely gave them more opportunities to meet a more suitable mate.

The researchers also found that age at marriage appeared to play a role in the likelihood of divorce as well-those getting married younger were more likely to divorce than those waiting till after age 40. Also, living in the city had an apparent impact - those who lived outside of Copenhagen were less likely to get divorced than those who lived in the city. Also, more education in general tended to result in lower divorce rates.

More information: Caroline Uggla et al. Higher divorce risk when mates are plentiful? Evidence from Denmark, Biology Letters (2018).

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