<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Research on Divorce: Continuing Trends and New Developments</th>
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<tr>
<td>Date</td>
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<td>Authors</td>
<td>Amato, Paul R.</td>
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<td>Source</td>
<td>Journal of Marriage and Family 72 (June 2010): 650-666</td>
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<td>Overview</td>
<td>A review of research on divorce during the past decade.</td>
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<td>Method</td>
<td>Utilized a variety of studies.</td>
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<td>Findings</td>
<td>This article looks at the past 10 years of research on divorce and its implications for adults and children as published in the Journal of Marriage and Family.</td>
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Demographics of Divorce in the United States

- The divorce rate increased dramatically from 1960 to 1980 and then gradually dropped. The common belief that about half of all marriages end in divorce is a reasonable approximation.
- The decline in the divorce rate is attributed to the rise in age of first marriage and increase in educational levels.

Predictors of Divorce

- Demographic and Economic Predictors of Divorce include marrying as a teen, being poor, unemployment, low education levels, cohabitation, premarital birth, bringing children from a prior relationship to the marriage, marry out of race, second or third marriages, growing up in a household without two continuously married parents. Wife’s employment has negative and positive consequences that offset one another resulting in no net effect on marriage.
- Interpersonal Predictors of Divorce include domestic violence, frequent conflict, infidelity, perceived relationship problems, weak commitment to marriage and low levels of love and trust between spouses. An accumulation of risk factors can lead to divorce through two paths – a high level of conflict and unhappiness or a low level of commitment.

Children’s Adjustment to Divorce

- Research continued to show that children with divorced parents score lower on a variety of emotional, behavioral, social, health, and academic outcomes. Adults with divorced parents obtain less education, have lower levels of psychological well-being, report more problems with their own marriages, are less close to their parents and are at greater risk of their own divorce.
- Studies look at differing variables such as genetics, environment, controlling for all of the variables, and measuring child outcomes before and after the divorce.
- Looking only at clinical measures may miss some of the subtle consequences of divorce for children.
- Factors that Affect Children’s Adjustment to Divorce – Most theoretical perspectives have drawn on stress, coping, risk and resiliency. The short-term stresses and the long-term strains increase risk for children. Variables that lower well-being include declines in household income, poor psychological functioning of resident parent, ineffective parenting, loss of contact with nonresident parent, continuing conflict and lack of cooperation among parents.
- A Multiple Transition Perspective – this perspective views the number of
transitions rather than the divorce itself as being a central variable to a child’s well-being.

- Divorce Causation – Rather than ask whether divorce affects children, the author suggests a more pertinent question may be how and under what circumstances does divorce affect children either positively or negatively?

Consequences of Divorce for Men and Women
- Divorced individuals exhibit more symptoms of depression and anxiety, more health problems, more substance abuse and a greater risk of overall mortality.
- Divorce was generally followed by short-term declines in psychological, social and physical well-being. After a few years, most individuals had adapted well to their new lives, although a significant minority remained seriously troubled.
- Variability in divorce adjustment can be attributed to the strength and duration of effects, whether the marriage was distressed, who initiated the divorce, presence of children, or whether this is a second or higher level divorce.

Intervention and Policies
- Divorce education classes for parents have become increasingly common and studies have indicated positive outcomes. Little information exists about whether the classes benefit the children. Lack of studies using control groups.
- Mediation resulted in greater satisfaction with post-divorce outcomes, more contact between non-resident parents and children, more communication between parents, and less conflict between parents.

Conclusions
Studies have consolidated and extended the research on divorce and have become more sophisticated methodologically. New conceptual perspectives have surfaced. There are still gaps in our understanding. Amato suggests eleven directions for future research including more on unmarried parents, gay and lesbian divorce, how the number of family structure transitions affect children’s well-being and more research on effective interventions.