

## **More men ending their marriages over women's excessive drinking as growing number of wives turn to alcohol to cope with stress**

- **More men filing for divorce as result of wives' excessive drinking**
- **So-called Sex and the City drinking and women turning to alcohol to cope with stress has been blamed for rise**
- **Top lawyer sees 40 to 50 divorces a year where alcohol is a factor**

By Lucy Osborne

Women's drinking is being increasingly cited by men when they file for divorce

It was once a familiar stereotype – the husband staying late in the pub after work, the angry wife fretting over his ruined dinner in the oven.

But so-called 'Sex and the City' drinking, and women turning to alcohol to cope with stress, has turned the cliché on its head.

A growing number of men are filing for divorce as a result of their wives' excessive drinking, top family lawyers have said.

Head of family law at Slater & Gordon, Amanda McAlister, said: 'The traditional image of the husband spending too long at the pub, while the obedient wife tended to the children is far less common than it was only ten or fifteen years ago.'

She sees 40 to 50 divorces a year where alcohol is a contributing factor – the vast majority where women are the problem.

Mrs McAlister said there has been a 70 per cent increase in men citing alcohol misuse in divorce over the past five years.

She said some women are 'Sex and the City drinkers' who go out to see friends or network.

'Many of the men who come to me say their wives often don't come home until 4am,' she added. More serious are 'home drinkers', with problems due to stress or depression, who drink large amounts, often in secret. In these cases, the wife tends to drink large amounts in the home, often in secret, and the husband has found hidden empty bottles of wine and vodka.

She added: 'Husbands, she says, 'will often initially cite a different reason for divorce, such as that their wife doesn't work or help around the house.

'It only later comes to light that the reason she's not doing so is because she's often drunk or nursing a hangover.

'Men are often embarrassed to discuss their wife's behaviour, so the prevalence of these issues is only now coming to light.'

Mrs McAlister recently dealt with the case of a businessman from Cheshire, with three children aged seven, 11 and 14. So-called Sex and the City, after the famous U.S. sitcom, and women turning to alcohol to cope with stress are turning traditional gender drinking clichés on its head

His wife started drinking when she lost her job. She became violent towards him and was arrested for GBH against him.

He was granted custody of the children, but lost his job as he became their carer. Elizabeth Hicks is head of family law at Irwin Mitchell. Speaking on behalf of family law group Resolution, said: 'Women are catching up with men in their reaction to stressful home and work lives. 'Modern society today is such that women can go out with girlfriends and drink in a way that wasn't possible 10 years ago and some of the effects are being seen in the home.

'More women are turning to the bottle and unfortunately when there are children involved the effects can be dire.'