

Sensitive people more vulnerable to online dating scams

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Sensitive and less emotionally intelligent people are more likely to be vulnerable to online dating scams.

That is the finding of a study by Dr Martin Graff of the University of South Wales presented today, Tuesday 26 April 2016, at the British Psychological Society Annual Conference in Nottingham.

Dr Graff said: "Perpetrators of dating scams simply set up false profiles on dating websites with the sole purpose of extracting money from their [victims](#). The scammer first grooms a victim by expressing love for them before outlining their desperate circumstances. They then attempt to request money from the victim. Our study focused on why some individuals are more likely to become the victims of these scams than others."

Over 90 victims of dating scams took part in questionnaires relating to their personality, how they relate to other people, self-esteem and [emotional intelligence](#); as well as their age and gender.

Analysis of the results revealed that victims had used dating sites for less than four weeks and had parted with amounts ranging from £50 to £63,000. Victims had a tendency to be efficient, organised and disciplined. However, they also were more likely to express emotion and display a preoccupied attachment style. This means they could be overly dependent on and seeking approval from the person to whom they are attached.

Martin said: "With the rise in the number of people using online dating, more and more people are likely to fall victim. Scammers use sophisticated techniques and eventually may begin to know exactly the sort of people to target and how to manipulate them.

"These findings will be beneficial to dating sites and [law enforcement agencies](#) in attempting to protect the vulnerable from being scammed. Further research should include interviews with a larger sample of people who have been the dating scam victims."

Provided by British Psychological Society

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