

# Can you find true, lasting love on Tinder? Study finds it's possible

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(HealthDay)—Tinder, Grindr and other dating apps have a reputation for

encouraging casual hookups, but a new study suggests app users may be looking for—and finding—love in all the right places after all.

Unlike more traditional dating sites such as Match.com and eHarmony, these apps are largely based on rating photos. You swipe right if you like what you see, or left if you don't. It's that simple, which is why many felt they would foster shallow relationships.

That wasn't the case for Los Angeles publicist Anthoni Allen-Zouhry, who swiped right when she first saw her now husband's photo on Tinder. They have now been married for close to two years and are expecting their first child. "Love found me," she said. "I was looking for a [relationship](#), but I was also just casually dating and not putting too much pressure on myself. It took a few months before we actually got serious."

And there are many couples just like Allen-Zouhry and her husband, according to a study published recently in the journal *PLOS ONE*.

Study author Gina Potarca, a researcher at the Institute of Demography and Socioeconomics at the University of Geneva in Switzerland, examined data from a 2018 family survey by the Swiss Federal Statistical Office to find out more about relationships formed online and offline. The survey included more than 3,200 people older than 18 who were in a relationship and had met their partner in the last decade.

Couples who met via a dating app were more interested in living together compared with those who met offline, and women who found their partner through a [dating app](#) were more apt to want kids than those who found their partner in other ways. What's more, couples who met on dating apps were just as happy in their relationship as pairs who met elsewhere.

App users also expanded their horizons and dating pool. These apps can

make it easier to meet people who live further away and come from different backgrounds, the study found.

"Large parts of the media claim they have a [negative impact](#) on the quality of relationships since they render people incapable of investing in an exclusive or long-term relationship. Up to now, though, there has been no evidence to prove this is the case," Potarca said in a University of Geneva news release.

"Knowing that dating apps have likely become even more popular during this year's periods of lockdown and social distancing, it is reassuring to dismiss alarming concerns about the long-term effects of using these tools," she added.

Random hookups take on an added risk during a pandemic, but it is difficult to be alone during such an uncertain time, said Pepper Schwartz, a professor of sociology at the University of Washington in Seattle. "People may actually take more time getting to know each other over text and FaceTime and find that they have more in common than they would have if they just met for a casual hookup," she said.

The swiping apps are easy to use, but you have to be even more discerning about who you decide to meet up with due to the risks of COVID-19, Schwartz said.

"People are scared and isolated, but they are not going to leave the house and risk their life to just meet anybody," agreed Lori Zaslow, a New York City matchmaker and relationship expert.

"The [emotional connection](#) is going to count a lot more in this day and age," she said. "Before, you might swipe quickly and not have been as selective, but the stakes are much higher now."

The new study took place in Switzerland, so it's hard to say whether they apply to other countries, said Schwartz. But, "I do believe that people go through a period of time where they sleep around and have sexual adventures with these apps, but then they may get tired of it and may look to settle down," she said.

And dating sites and apps are a good place to find Mr. or Ms. Right, Schwartz said. "People on any dating site are putting themselves out there and are motivated to meet someone," she said. "If you are at a bar or restaurant, someone you meet may or may not be looking to connect."

Schwartz said paid apps or services are the way to go when you are truly serious about settling down. "If you are looking for someone who is looking for someone, knowing they are willing to pay shows you that they are serious."

**More information:** The [American Sexual Health Association](#) offers tips for fostering healthy romantic relationships.

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