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### Online Dating During the COVID-19 Pandemic: Is it the New Norm?

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# Online Dating During the COVID-19 Pandemic: Is it the New Norm?



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## Introduction

- Dating websites and apps are commonly seen as a socially acceptable and advantageous means of meeting a long-term partner (Smith & Anderson, 2016).
- 70% of same-sex couples have met their partner online rather than through a face-to-face introduction (Hobbs et al., 2017).
- We examined single people's dating app usage collected as part of The Kinsey Institute's annual *Singles in America* project, as well as video dating activities and behaviors engaged in over the past 16 months during the COVID-19 pandemic (March 2020 – July 2021).

## Methods

- Data collected from the Kinsey Institute's *Singles in America* 2021 survey
- 4,877 participants, with  $M_{age}$  45.92
- 62% identify as women, 11.5% as sexual minorities (gay, lesbian, or bisexual)
- Ran regression analyses to examine changes in usage frequency, and how correlations might occur between gender, sexuality, and age
- Common video date activities are based on independent coding and categorization (n = 627)

## How did dating app usage change?

96% of single people were using dating apps during the COVID-19 pandemic.

One quarter (24.9%) of single people were using dating apps **more frequently** compared to before the pandemic.

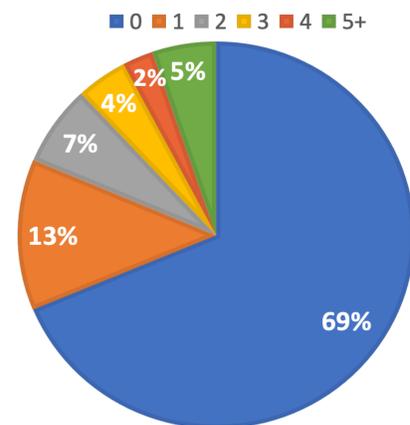
42.5% were **less active** during the pandemic, with the remaining 32.6% reporting no change.

## Who used dating apps more frequently?

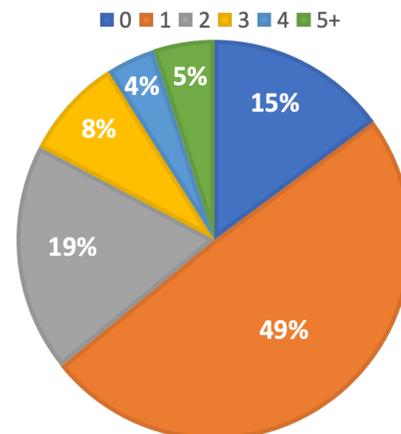
**Men and sexual minorities** were using dating apps at a higher frequency during the pandemic, compared to women and heterosexual people, respectively

( $B = .16, p = .006$  and  $B = .19, p = .01$ )

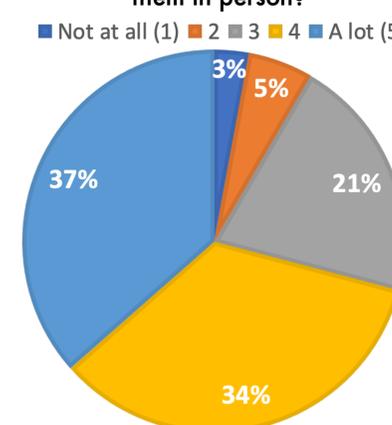
About how many video dates did you have in the past year?



How many video dates in the past year were first dates?



How much did your video date help you determine if you wanted to meet them in person?



## Did people feel romantic chemistry on their video date(s)?

77.7% said yes, while 22.3% said no.

## Common Video Date Activities

Among 627 people who described what activities they did on their video date, we identified seven common themes



Talk & Chat  
81.2 %



Eat & Drink  
14.51 %



Entertainment & Games  
13.88 %



Sexual activity  
7.5 %



Make in-person plans  
3.35 %



Cook a Meal  
2.07 %



Show & Tell  
2.07 %

After creating a codebook with all the authors, two independent researchers coded the data. Inter-rater agreement was 87.7%

## Discussion

- This research suggests dating app usage decreased during the pandemic (except for men and sexual minorities).
- There is a wide variety of activities that individuals can engage in during video dates. Additionally, online dating could become a new norm post-pandemic.



Take a picture to download the abstract and more information.