

Coronavirus Plays Havoc with Dating, Matchmaking

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March 14, 2020 08:27

March is usually a busy time for singles who use the warmer weather to arrange blind dates and prospective marriages. But the spreading coronavirus epidemic has water on any such plans this year.

February to April is peak season for the wedding industry. The owner of one matchmaking company in Gangnam said, "Usually this time of year we set up around 20 per week, but we've managed to arrange less than half of that this year."

Parents whose children are getting past prime marrying age are getting nervous. One matchmaker for the wealthy said, "Young people can afford to put off any plans, but that's not the case for older singles."

One single woman in her late 30s said, "I'm running out of time to find a spouse and get married, but the coronavirus epidemic is making things more difficult." And parent of a single son aged 41 said, "My son has been reluctant to go on blind dates and he'll probably procrastinate even more due to the epidemic."



Women tend to get more discouraged than men by the epidemic. Matchmaking company Bien-Aller surveyed 238 men and women by e-mail and found that 35 percent and 55.4 percent of women said the epidemic is hindering them from going on blind dates.

The biggest reason cited by women was the protective gear, which resembles deep purdah.

"I don't want to go on a blind date wearing a face mask and it's a hassle having to adjust my make-up every time I take it off," one woman in her 30s said.

Sohn Dong-kyu at Bien-Aller said, "Another concern people have is their digital tracks being revealed by health authorities in case they test positive for the virus."