

RESEARCH

Love styles of young adults in a metropolitan city of India

PriyaRanjan Avinash, Gurvinder Kalra, Alka Subramanyam,
Henal Shah, Ravindra Kamath

Abstract

Background: Biological approaches tend to treat love as a brain generated physiological process like hunger or thirst. On the other hand, psychologists have created many descriptive theories of love in an effort to understand the full range of experience and behaviours associated with love. One of the most prominent and interesting models is the John Alan Lee's theory called "love styles". According to him, there are six love styles, named: eros, ludus, storge, pragmatic, maniac, and agape.

Aims and objectives: This study aimed to assess the love styles of young adults and assess its relationship with their personality traits.

Materials and methods: A total of 120 young adults were taken as the sample using purposive sampling technique. Socio-demographic profile, relationship status, and attitude towards sex were assessed through semi-structured questionnaire. Love Attitude Scale was applied and clinical assessment of personality traits was done using the text revision of the fourth edition of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-IV-TR) after taking their informed consent. Data was pooled and statistical analysis was done, using analysis of variance (ANOVA) and chi-square tests.

Results: The most preferred love style in the study population was eros, while the least preferred was ludus. Extramarital relationship and premarital sex was positively associated with ludus love style. Subjects with borderline and narcissistic personality traits scored significantly high on the ludus love styles.

Conclusion: Love styles differ between the two sexes and also changes with their age. Personality trait influences the love style of a person.

Avinash PR, Kalra G, Subramanyam A, Shah H, Kamath R. Love styles of young adults in a metropolitan city of India. Open J Psychiatry Allied Sci. 2015;6:83-8. doi: 10.5958/2394-2061.2015.00002.6

Keywords: Personality. Relationship. Sex. Age.

Correspondence: drpriyaranjan.avinash@gmail.com

Received on 9 November 2014. Revised on 31 December 2014. Accepted on 1 January 2014.

While some emotions like surprise develop over a period of seconds, others can last for years like that of love.[1] Trying to define love is a difficult task. Besides loving a spouse or boyfriend or girlfriend, people can love their children, parents, siblings, pets, country, or God, etc. Although the English language has only one word to apply to each of these situations, there are clearly different meanings involved. When we talk about person-to-person love, the simplest definition may be the one given by Robert Heinlein in the book, "Stranger in a strange land": "Love is that condition in which the happiness of another person is essential to your own." [2]

In any type of love, the element of caring about the loved person is essential. Unless genuine caring is present, what looks like love may be just one form of desire. For example, a teenage boy may tell his girlfriend "I love you"

just to convince her to have sex with him; in other cases, the desire to gain wealth, status, or power may lead a person to pretend to love someone to reach these goals. [2]

Until very recently, the topic of love was more in the province of writers, poets, and philosophers than in the minds of psychologists and scientists. [2] Even though it has been said that "love makes the world go round", few psychologists have addressed this subject in any detail.

According to a love survey conducted by sociologist John Alan Lee, there are six primary types of romantic love, also known as colours of love. This was further refined by Hendricks and Hendricks. Lee assigned Greek and Latin names to these categories. The six valid ways of loving are eros, ludus, storge, pragma, mania, and agape. [3-5]

Now let's see the individual love styles:

Eros can be described as a passionate type of love; this style "involves powerful attraction to the partner, both physically and emotionally".[6] An erotic lover is described as one who is "open and honest" and "seeks a deep, pervasive rapport with the partner".[3,7] Individuals with an eros attitude report love as intense passion toward another and believe that love is physically centred, but accompanied with a sense of understanding the other and an almost immediate attraction toward the other.[5,8] Erotic love, according to Lee, is often quick to ignite and quick to flicker out, and infrequently turns into a deep lasting relationship.[2]

Ludus is described as the "game-playing" type of love, characterised by being non-committal and distant.[6,9] Since, individuals who endorse ludus have a more casual attitude toward relationships, they might be likely to endorse liberal (recreational) sexual attitudes more so than conservative (traditional) ones. Studies have found that people who report a ludus attitude believe that love is an interactive game played out with multiple partners, dating several of them, and preserving their options by avoiding dependence on their lover.[2]

Pragma is characterised as the practical type of love, in which an individual chooses a romantic partner based on considerations such as how well the partner will reflect on the chooser's career or family. Those who have a pragma attitude believe love is realistic and calculated rationally. The expression of love is reserved for another who has similar goal pursuits and family background.[5]

Storge is warmth and affection that slowly and imperceptibly turns into "love without fever, tumult, or folly". Storge emerges from friendships, and it's hard to tell when exactly the couple fell in love in the first place.[9] It is believed that a happy, secure family background is often seen among those with storge preferences.[4]

Mania, in contrast, is a stormy, topsy-turvy kind of love. The manic lover is either climbing a mountain of ecstasy or sliding into a valley of despair. Manic love is like a roller-coaster ride: the thrilling dizziness, and ups and downs usually come to an abrupt and rapid ending.[2] A person reporting a mania attitude believes that love is unpredictable, with emotional highs and lows, and can be obsessive, possessive, and dependent.[5,6]

Agape, Lee's final category of love, is based on the traditional "Christian" view of love as an undemanding, patient, kind, and ever present.[2] Those with agape attitude believe in patience, forgiveness, and supportiveness.[5,8].

Love attitudes are important because they capture variability in the ways people report expressing affection

toward one another. Research has related expressions of love to numerous issues and has revealed, among others, that sexual orientation, personality types, and relationship status are predictors of love attitudes.[6,7,10]

Love often speaks the language of touch, but this area itself has been virtually untouched by researchers. Lee believed and future studies found that relationship based on similar love styles last longer. In this era of short term relationships, will determination of the same help in any way?

There are very few researches on the love styles internationally, while the land of Kamasutra has none till date. All these questions and the relatively barren field of love styles in India pushed us to pioneer a study on the love styles of Indian young adults.

Aims and objectives

1. To study the love styles in young adults.
2. To study the relationship between various socio-demographic domains and the love styles in young adults.
3. To study the relationship between the personality traits and the love styles in young adults.

Materials and methods

Site of the study

1. Medical students, resident doctors, and teachers in a Municipal Medical College.
2. People visiting other public places like malls, restaurants, museums, etc.

The study was a cross-sectional, single interview study with a sample size of 120, and purposive sampling technique was used for sample collection.

Materials

1. Semi structured proforma consisting of details about socio-demographic profile.
2. A self-prepared 18-item questionnaire probing into various areas of interpersonal relationship and sexual activities.
3. **Love Attitude Scale** by Hendrick and Hendrick[5] is a 42-item Likert scale measuring attitudes about each love styles. There were five options starting from strongly agree to strongly disagree with corresponding scores of 5 to 1.

There are seven items each for each type of love styles. The maximum score for each type of love style can be 35, while the minimum score is seven.

Respondents were asked to indicate the degree to which they agreed or disagreed with each statement in the scale. The questions are answered with their current partners in mind and if currently the subjects don't have any partner, then the questions are answered with their most recent partner in mind. If the respondents have never

been in love or in a relationship before, then the questions are answered in terms of what they think their responses would most likely be.

4. **DSM-IV-TR:** The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM), published by the American Psychiatric Association, offers a common language and standard criteria for the classification of mental disorders. A text revision of the fourth edition of the DSM, known as the DSM-IV-TR, was published in 2000.[11] It is a categorical classification system. It has diagnostic criteria for various personality disorders and the criteria were used to assess the personality traits of the respondents.

Selection criteria: Sample was collected based on the following inclusion criteria:

1. Individuals 20-40 years of age.
2. Individuals who could comprehend English language.
3. Individuals who were voluntarily willing to participate in the study.

Methodology

Consecutive medical students, resident doctors, and teachers of different departments of the Topiwala National Medical College & BYL Nair Municipal Hospital, Mumbai were screened for the applicability of inclusion and exclusion criteria. Also, people visiting public places like malls, restaurants, etc. in Mumbai who were willing to participate in the study, were screened similarly. They were briefed about the study and were asked to answer the 18-item questionnaire after signing the Informed Consent Form. The Love Attitude Scale was applied to them. In addition, they were assessed for personality traits using DSM-IV-TR. The data was collected and statistical analysis was done using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software, and appropriate statistical tests, i.e. chi-square and analysis of variance (ANOVA) were applied wherever necessary.

Results and Discussion

The results of the study were as follows:-

1) Socio-demographic profile: The sample was almost evenly distributed in the two age groups (55% in age group 21-30 years and 45% in age group of 31-40 years). Men comprised 51.7% while women comprised a slightly less, 48.3% of the study population. 14.2% of the study population had education upto secondary level, 42.5% was graduate and remaining 43.3% had postgraduate education.

The majority of the subjects were working (78.3%).

2) Marriage, relationship, and sex: Around 66.7% subjects were currently in a relationship, while rests were not in a relationship at that moment. About one third (33.3%) of the subjects were in a relationship for last one

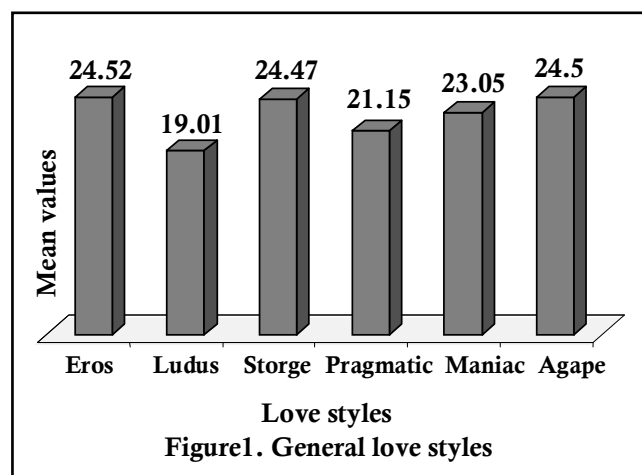
to three years. 43.3% of the subjects were married, of which 61.8% were in an arranged marriage and 38.2% were in a love marriage. A maximum percentage (34.5%) was married for one to five years, followed by married for more than 10 years, and about 15% was married for less than 1 year. Also a substantial percentage (10.9%) of the subjects had some extramarital affair at some point in their lives.

Majority of the subjects were living alone, while a very small proportion of the subjects (1.7%) were currently living-in with their partner. Around 9.6% had at some point in their lives lived-in with some partner. The percentage of subjects having a past relationship was equal to those having none (49.2%). A higher percentage (61.9%) of the subjects had a bad outcome of their past relationship.

64.2% of the study subjects have had a sexual experience in their lives, a majority of them (80.5%) experiencing it when in a committed relationship. Only 3.9% had a casual sexual experience. Ninety six per cent had a single sexual partner.

A whopping 90% agreed that emotional involvement is necessary for a satisfactory sex life, which somehow reflected in the higher percentage of the study subjects (63.1%) being sexually satisfied.

3) Love styles: The preferred love styles of the study population are as shown in figure 1. The most preferred love style in the study population was eros, closely followed by storge and agape (all are preferred by about 24.5% of the study population). The least preferred was ludus, which was preferred by 19% of the sample.

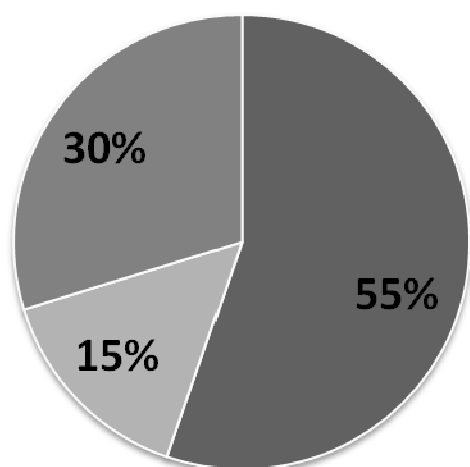


4) Personality types: Out of a total of 120 subjects, 47 subjects had some prominent personality trait according to the DSM-IV-TR; of which a maximum, 55.30% had anxious-dependent traits (Figure 2).

5) Love styles and different socio-demographic areas
i) Age and love styles

The younger age group of the subjects, i.e. 21-30 years, has a significantly higher score on the storge indices of love styles than the 31-40 years' age group ($p=.01$) as seen

Figure 2. Personality Traits



■ Narcissistic ■ Borderline/Histrionic ■ Anxious-dependent

in table 1. This was not consistent with the findings of Butler *et al.*,[12] in which age was related to responses on mania and agape subscales.

This could be explained on the basis that most of the 31-40 years' age group subjects were married and most of the marriages being arranged; companionate kind of love was found in lesser degree than the younger age group. However, there was no significant difference in the love styles of married and unmarried subjects.

ii) Gender and love styles

Females had a significantly higher score on the pragmatic indices of love style than men ($p=.03$) (Table 2). Hence, it can be inferred that young Indian females are more practical in their love style than that of the young males. However, they also had a significantly higher score on the maniac indices of the love styles ($p=.02$)(Table 2). This finding was partly consistent with Hendrick and Hendrick,[5] in which women had a higher score on pragmatic love style. But, Indian men did not have a significantly higher score on ludus love style than women as found by Hendrick and Hendrick.[5]

Leon *et al.*[13] found that Latino men had a significantly higher score on ludus and agape love styles. This was somehow reflected in the study with men scoring higher on ludus and agape subtypes; however, it was not

Table 2: Gender and love styles

Gender	Eros	Ludus	Storge	Pragmatic	Maniac	Agape
Male	24.45	19.73	24.58	19.77	21.68	25
Female	24.59	18.24	24.34	22.62	24.52	23.97
p value				.03	.02	

Table 3: Educational level and love styles

Education	Eros	Ludus	Storge	Pragmatic	Maniac	Agape
Up to secondary	22.18	20	21.76	21.82	25.53	24.76
Graduate	24.92	19.92	24.73	22.73	23.55	24.24
Post graduate	24.88	17.79	25.1	19.38	21.75	24.67
p value				.005	.018	

Table 1. Age and love styles

Age group	21-30 years	31-40 years	p value
Eros	25.17	23.72	
Ludus	17.89	20.37	
Storge	25.67	23	0.01
Pragmatic	20.48	21.96	
Maniac	23.15	22.93	
Agape	25.3	23.52	

statistically significant. This could be explained by the conservative nature of Indian society than the western one.

iii) Educational level and love styles

Among the subjects, graduates had higher score on pragmatic indices of love style suggesting that certain amount of education make people become more practical in their love style ($p=.005$) (Table 3). Subjects who were educated only up to secondary level had a higher score than other groups on the maniac indices ($p=.018$)(Table 3). We did not find any previous study dealing with this aspect.

iv) Working status and love styles

Working subjects had a significantly higher scores on eros ($p=.02$) and agape ($p=.04$) love styles while non-working subjects had a higher score on pragmatic love styles ($p=.005$) (Figure 3). This could be explained as with working status come increased self-esteem, and as has been found by Campbell *et al.*,[14] self-esteem is positively linked to passionate love, i.e. eros love style. As working people are financially independent, and also in family and social hierarchy they take a higher position, they will be more giving by nature and more altruistic in their love style.[14]

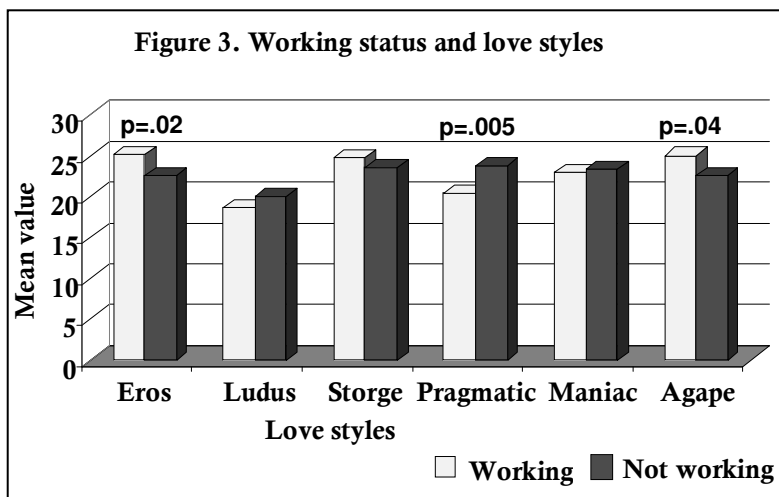
6) Love styles and relationships

i) Love styles and currently in relationship

Subjects who were currently in a relationship were more pragmatic or practical than those who were not ($p=.02$). Erwin[15] found out that among British college going students those who were in love at the time of the study had a significantly higher score on the eros and agape dimensions of the Love Attitude Scale. However in this study, subjects who were in a relationship at that moment, majority of them were married and most of them were in an arranged marriage, which is a very practical kind of a relationship. So, the high score on the pragmatic subtype.

ii) Love styles and past relationship

Subjects who had prior relationships had a higher score on the ludus love style than those having no relationship



in the past ($p=.01$). Subjects not having prior relationships had a higher score on storge love style than those having prior relationships ($p=.001$). This finding is partly consistent with Hensley,[16] who found that as the score on ludus increases the individual reports larger number of sexual partners. Ludic lovers will frequently have several partners simultaneously and rarely approach their relationship seriously.[4] So, this can partially explain the higher probability of them being in a past relationship.

Subjects having good outcome from their past relationship had a significantly higher score on eros love style than those having a bad outcome ($p=.04$). Contrary to this, subjects having a bad outcome from their past relationship had a significantly higher score on their maniac love style ($p=.001$). As manic love is characterised by obsessive and possessive behaviour, this could lead to a bad outcome of their relationship, or conversely people who had bad outcome from their past relationship had become more possessive and obsessive.

iii) Love styles and marriage type

Among the study subjects, those who were in an arranged marriage had a significantly higher score on pragmatic ($p=.02$) and maniac ($p=.02$) love styles than those who were in a love marriage. Conversely, those who were in a love marriage had a significantly higher score on the storge love style than those who were in an arranged marriage ($p=.04$). No study dealing with the love styles and different types of marriage could be found in a pubmed search.

However, this can be explained by the logic and simple fact that arranged marriage is a practical arrangement where two people who fulfil either partner's wish-list before agreeing to marriage. So, people choosing arranged marriage would be practical and pragmatic. As there is no previous bond between the two partners, the chances of possessiveness and obsession could be higher than other type of marriages. The higher score on storge subtype in subjects who were in love marriage could be because of longer duration of relationship, where it started with

friendship to gradually become and finally materialise into marriage.

iv) Love styles and extramarital relationship

As expected among the subjects, those who had an extramarital relationship had a significantly higher score on ludus ($p=.04$) and maniac ($p=.05$) love styles. They will frequently have several partners simultaneously and rarely approach their relationships seriously.[4] They are attracted to a variety of partners and enjoy sex in the absence of deep involvement. Individuals with a ludus style thrive on attention and are often willing to take risks.[17]

v) Love styles and sexual activity

Those who had sex in past had a significantly higher score on the ludus style than those who had not ($p=.007$), while those who never had sex had a significantly higher score on storge ($p=.02$) and agape love styles ($p=.02$) than those who had. This finding is consistent with the Hensley's study,[16] which says that sexual experience is related with the ludus subscale.

vi) Love styles and emotional involvement

A significantly higher score on ludus subtype was found in subjects who believed that emotional involvement is not necessary for a satisfactory sexual relationship than those who believed otherwise ($p=.027$), while a significantly lower score was found on the eros subtype among them ($p=.04$). Hensley[16] also reported that as the tendency to endow items of the ludus scale increases, the individual reports an ever larger number of sexual partners. So, subjects who believed that emotional involvement is not necessary for a satisfactory sex life were naturally found to have more sexual partners than those who believe otherwise. Subjects who said they were satisfied sexually had a significantly higher score on pragmatic love style ($p=.02$) than those who were not.

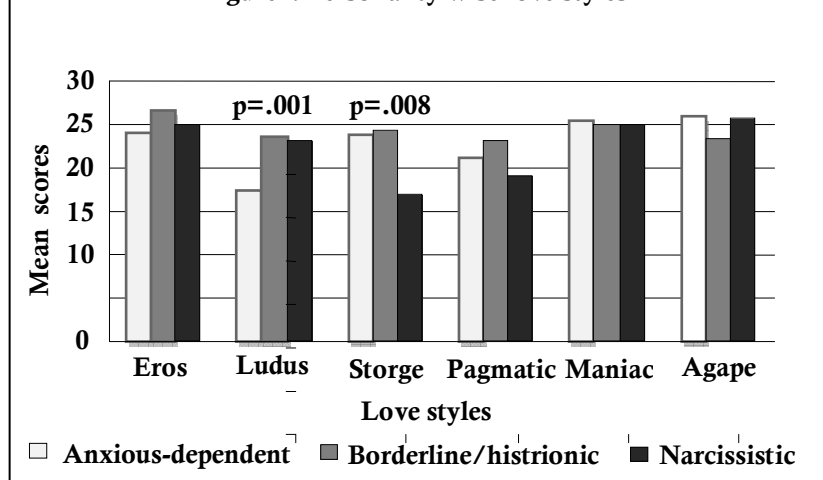
vii) Love styles and people with children

Subjects who had children had a significantly higher score on pragmatic subtype of love styles ($p=.003$) than those who did not. It can be hypothesised that as children come, so comes higher responsibility and lesser time for the partner; the approach towards love becomes more practical or pragmatic. By the time children are born, the age also increases and as was found in our study that with older age the score on pragmatic subtype increases.

7) Love styles and personality traits

Subjects with borderline and narcissistic personality traits had a higher score on the ludus subtype of love styles ($p=.001$), while subjects with anxious/ dependent and borderline personality traits had a significantly higher

Figure4. Personality wise love styles



score than subjects with narcissistic traits on storge subtype of love styles ($p=.008$). This finding is in keeping with Campbell *et al.*, [14] who found that narcissism was associated primarily with a game-playing love style. Narcissists' game-playing love style was the result of a need for power and autonomy, and was linked with greater relationship alternatives and lesser commitment. [14]

Conclusion

The most preferred love style in the study population was eros, while the least preferred was ludus. The younger age group of the subjects had a significantly higher score on the storge indices of love styles. Females had a significantly higher score on the pragmatic and maniac love styles. People with eros love style have had good outcome from their relationship than people with maniac love style. Those who had arranged marriage had high pragmatic and maniac love style. People who had extramarital relationships had high ludus love style. People with pragmatic love style were more satisfied with their sex life. People with ludus subtype of love style believed that emotional involvement is not necessary for sexual relationships. People with borderline and narcissistic personality traits had more of the ludus love styles, while anxious/ dependent and borderline personality traits' people had more of storge subtype of love styles.

Source of support: Nil. **Declaration of interest:** None.

References

1. Das B. Emotion: its role in human life. *Dysphrenia*. 2012;3:129-33.
2. Masters WH, Johnson VE, Kolodny RC. Sex and human loving. Jaico; 2006.
3. Lee JA. The colors of love: an exploration of the ways of loving. Don Mills, Ontario: New Press; 1973.

4. Lee JA. Love styles. In: Sternberg RJ, Barnes M, editors. *The psychology of love*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press; 1988. p. 38-67.
5. Hendrick C, Hendrick S. A theory and method of love. *J Pers Soc Psychol*. 1986;50:392-402.
6. Montgomery MJ, Sorell GT. Differences in love attitudes across family life stages. *Fam Relat*. 1997;46:55-61.
7. Hendrick SS, Hendrick C. Love and sexual attitudes, self-disclosure and sensation seeking. *J Soc Pers Relat*. 1987;4:281-97.
8. Hendrick C, Hendrick S, Dicke A. The Love Attitudes Scale: short form. *J Soc Pers Relat*. 1998;15:147-59.

9. Hendrick C, Hendrick SS. Research on love: does it measure up? *J Pers Soc Psychol*. 1989;56:784-94.
10. Hendrick SS, Hendrick C, Adler NL. Romantic relationships: love, satisfaction, and staying together. *J Pers Soc Psychol*. 1988;54:980-6.
11. American Psychiatric Association. Diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorder. 4th ed. Text rev. Washington, DC: American Psychiatric Association; 2000.
12. Butler R, Walker WR, Skowronski TJ, Shannon L. Age and responses to the love attitudes scale: consistency in structure, differences in scores. *Int J Aging Hum Dev*. 1995;40:281-96.
13. Leon JJ, Parra F, Cheng T, Flores RE. Love-styles among Latino community college students in Los Angeles. *Psychol Rep*. 1995;77:527-30.
14. Campbell WK, Rudich EA, Sedikides C. Narcissism, self-esteem, and the positivity of self-views: two portraits of self-love. *Pers Soc Psychol Bull*. 2002;28:358-68.
15. Erwin PG. Love attitudes and romantic involvement: a replication and extension. *Percept Mot Skills*. 1999;88:317-8.
16. Hensley WE. The effect of a ludus love style on sexual experience. *Soc Behav Pers*. 1996;24:205-12.
17. Paul EL, McManus B, Hayes A. "Hookups": characteristics and correlates of college students' spontaneous and anonymous sexual experiences. *J Sex Res*. 2000;37:76-88.

Priya Ranjan Avinash, MD, DPM, Senior Resident, LGB Regional Institute of Mental Health, Tezpur, Assam; **Gurvinder Kalra**, MD, DPM, Psychiatry Registrar at Whittlesea Community Care Unit, Preston, Melbourne, Victoria 3072, Australia; **Alka Subramanyam**, MD, DNB, Assistant Professor; **Henal Shah**, MD, Associate Professor; **Ravindra Kamath**, MD, Professor and Head, Department of Psychiatry, TNMC, BYL Nair Hospital, Mumbai, Maharashtra, India.