

## 'Gimmick' date weddings more likely to end in divorce, according to study

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A word of warning to couples planning to tie the knot on 'special' days, according to new research. Credit: University of Melbourne

Weddings celebrated on Valentine's Day or special-number dates like 9/9/99 or 1/2/03 are 18 to 36 percent more likely to end in divorce than

weddings on ordinary dates, according to a new study by leading University of Melbourne economists.

The Melbourne Institute report, "Not Your Lucky Day: Romantically and Numerically Special Wedding Date Divorce Risks," finds that these are incredibly popular wedding dates, with up to five times as many weddings than on comparable ordinary dates.

Previous research has considered many factors that raise the risks of divorce, but report authors Dr Jan Kabátek and Professor David Ribar said that their study into wedding dates was the first of its kind in the world.

By their fifth anniversaries, eleven percent of Valentine's Day marriages, ten percent of same-number-date marriages and eight percent of ordinary-date marriages were estimated to fail. By their ninth anniversaries, 21 percent of Valentine's Day marriages, 19 percent of same-number-date marriages and 16 percent of ordinary-date marriages were estimated to fail.

Differences in the characteristics of couples who married on special dates explained some of these higher risks.

"People who got married on special dates were more likely to have been married before and more likely to have children already," said Professor Ribar.

"We also found that spouses who married on special dates were less alike, in terms of education and ages, than spouses who married on ordinary dates," said Dr Kabátek, a member of the ARC Centre of Excellence for Children and Families over the Life Course.

"We also found that brides who married on Valentine's Day were more

likely to be pregnant on their [wedding](#) day than those who married on ordinary dates," he said.

The researchers say that it's not the date itself that increases a couple's vulnerability but rather what the choice of date reveals about the couple.

"Couples who marry on ordinary dates may be more strongly influenced by characteristics of their relationships and their compatibility than couples who marry on special dates," said Professor Ribar.

The study used Dutch registries that covered all marriages and divorces in that country between 1999 and 2013. The data included information for more than one million marriages.

Provided by University of Melbourne

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