

Fraud Cases Involving Older Adults in Taiwan

According to the National Police Agency, more than **9,000 seniors aged 65+** were defrauded in 2024 — an increase of about 3,600 cases compared to 2023. Older adults are often targeted as “Easy targets” because they usually have financial assets (pensions, retirement funds, or real estate) and may fall victim due to **social isolation**, **limited digital literacy**, and **expectations of investment returns**.

Case No.	Fraud Type	Process / Tactics (Psychological Manipulation)	Loss Amount	Follow-up
Case 1 — Fake High-end Investment (former bank executive)	Investment scam (AI-assisted)	<div><div>1.</div><div>Gained trust via TikTok influencer, then moved to LINE group.</div><div>2.</div><div>“Assistants” built rapport through emotional care (including asking about foot injury).</div><div>3.</div><div>Lured victim to download investment app that mimicked the stock exchange; allowed small withdrawals (50–60k NTD) as “proof”.</div><div>4.</div><div>Required signing of a non-disclosure agreement to</div></div>	32 million NTD	After a money mule was arrested, police contacted the victim, who realized the truth. The victim had suicidal thoughts , but was later saved by her dog. She now repays approx. 1.2M NTD/month in loans.

		<p>block external help.</p> <p>5. Induced financing; instructed to give fake reasons to banks (e.g., “buying gold”, “wedding banquet”) to avoid detection.</p>		
<p>Case 2 — Property Mortgage (family victim)</p>	<p>Fake prosecutor / identity fraud → led to mortgage loan scam</p>	<p>1. Caller impersonated bank manager; then “transferred” to fake police officer claiming identity theft.</p> <p>2. Threatened involvement in a homicide case demanding a 5M NTD guarantee deposit.</p> <p>3. Extracted information that the victim owned a house.</p> <p>4. Coerced into signing with private lender at 7% monthly interest (84% APR).</p> <p>5. Threatened not to tell children.</p>	<p>Borrowed over 6M NTD paying 420k NTD/month interest</p>	<p>Daughter reported to police; funds were unrecoverable except arresting the mule. Daughter later refinanced mortgage with a bank to save the property. Senior cried out of shame.</p>

Case 3 — Veteran entertainer	Fake prosecutor scam	Syndicate kept calling for 4 to 5 days, using forged government documents with seals . Victim lowered guard due to strong belief in authority.	980k NTD	Senior concealed the case from daughter living with her.
Case 4 — Luggage merchant	Fake telecom / fake prosecutor	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Impersonated Chunghwa Telecom (Taiwan’s largest telecommunications company.) with accurate personal data. 2. Switched to fake prosecutor claiming money laundering; warned of account freeze. 3. Coerced victim into opening online banking and transferring funds to “escrow accounts.” 	25M NTD	After transfers were made, victim learned the account had been flagged.
Case 5 — Insurance policy fraud	Misused identity to process policy loan/cancellation	Syndicate accessed senior’s personal data, registered online access to the insurer, and processed withdrawals/loans without knowledge.	Tens of millions NTD (7 policies drained)	Arbitration ruled insurer should have intervened given senior’s age and abnormal frequency; insurer

				ordered to compensate several tens of thousands NTD.
Case 6 — Elder farmer living alone (“Uncle Tang”)	Fake investment / emotional grooming (“godson”)	A 50-year-old man befriended a 97-year-old, living alone with dementia , calling him “godfather” (a term for a close, non-biological elder male figure). Later induced “investment in outer space business” (shell company).	2M NTD (life savings)	Senior, due to dementia, forgot and insists it was not fraud; no police report. Lives on farmer pension.
Case 7 — Retired civil servant (“Uncle Cheng”)	Romance / emotional debt scam	Woman claiming to be “marketing secretary” frequently checked on him; used sob-story tactics (lawsuit over gown, parents hospitalized) to borrow money repeatedly.	3M+ NTD	Wife learned after loan sharks called the house. Senior later became severely depressed and had a second stroke .
Case 8 — Property interception in time	Fake investment → property mortgage	Senior, persuaded by a “new friend”, attempted to mortgage house for 6M NTD without telling family.	Attempted fraud 6M NTD	Senior had subscribed to Real Estate Instant Alert service; children got SMS and intervened

				before mortgage filed.
Case 9 — AI voice cloning	“Guess who I am” / fake relative using AI	Received a call with son’s voice , claiming emergency. Syndicate used pre-recorded samples to clone voice.	Not disclosed	Senior (80) stayed calm, called son via landline to verify, then used a fact-checking service MopEn(a local fact-checking chatbot service provided by a Taiwanese non-profit.)— scam hung up instantly.
Case 10 — Bank intervention	Fake prosecutor (fake asset seizure)	Syndicate claimed unpaid premium; threatened fake garnishment ; instructed senior to withdraw or wire funds while staying on the call and forbidding disclosure .	Attempts included 10M+ NTD, 3M NTD CD, 550k NTD (“stock settlement”)	Bank staff detected anomalies (large withdrawal + on phone), coordinated with police to intercept.
Case 11 — “Land master” double-	Fake prosecutor + property mortgage	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Target seniors; defraud cash first. 2. Collude with land officers and loan 	Syndicate gained 370M+ NTD . Single	12 victims; one died of depression. Prosecutors seek 10-year

stripping case	(second-layer fraud)	brokers to strip again via mortgage. 3. Target seniors who live alone and have no heirs — fabricate wills to seize estates upon death.	victim lost 55M NTD plus villa mortgaged for tens of millions.	sentence for ringleader.
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Common Fraud Patterns Targeting Older Adults

1. Fake Investment (most common)

- **Emotional grooming** — long-term care and contact, often more attentive than real children
- **Precision marketing** — scripts customized from social media profiling
- **Proof of gain** — small early payouts to build trust and sunk cost
- **Simulated environment** — bots in group chats faking consensus and success
- **Advanced stage (“second stripping”)** — inducing property mortgage

2. Fake Police / Fake Government Agencies (third most common)

- **Authority impersonation** — telecom/bank/police/prosecutor
- **Accurate personal data** to enhance credibility
- **Fear induction** — homicide, fraud, laundering allegations
- **Isolation** — tell no one; stay on call at the bank
- **“Virtual investigation”** — require “security deposits” or “unfreezing fees”

3. Romance / Emotional Fraud

- **Target social isolation**
- **Long-term emotional build-up**
- **AI identity manipulation** — face swap, stolen celebrity photos, or AI-cloned family voice

- **Sob-story borrowing** — illness, accidents, sentimental hooks (e.g., to “save a dog”)

Why These Tactics are Effective in Taiwan?

1. Deep-Rooted Fear of Authority

In Taiwanese society, there is a general and deep-seated reverence for governmental and judicial authorities, such as the police and prosecutors. This cultural deference means that when fraudsters impersonate these figures, victims are less likely to question their legitimacy. The tactic of creating fear through threats of legal action (e.g., "your account will be frozen," "you're involved in a homicide case") is highly effective because it triggers an immediate, culturally conditioned response of compliance and fear.

2. The Culture of “Face” and Emotional Debt.

The concept of "saving face" and the obligations of interpersonal relationships heavily influence social interactions. Many older adults fall victim because they feel too embarrassed to refuse a persistent request, or they feel an emotional debt to someone who has shown them kindness. After being defrauded, this same culture of "face" prevents them from reporting the crime. They often feel deep shame, blame themselves, and avoid telling their families to prevent "losing face" or becoming a burden.

3. Social Isolation and an Unmet Need for Companionship

With changing family structures and modernization, many older adults in Taiwan experience significant social isolation. Fraud syndicates expertly exploit this vulnerability by providing what victims crave most: consistent, attentive companionship. This "emotional grooming" is often perceived as more caring than the attention they receive from their own busy children. Fraudsters successfully position themselves as trusted confidants, making it far easier to manipulate victims emotionally and financially.

Post-Incident Handling & Prevention

Older victims often avoid reporting due to **shame, face-saving, and fear of burdening family.**

- 1 **Asset recovery is difficult** — especially when converted into crypto (e.g., USDT) or non-custodial wallets.
- 2 **Second-round fraud** — scammers pose as “lawyers” or “recovery agents” and charge 20–30% upfront.
- 3 **Family fallout** — leads to intra-family conflict, depression, **secondary stroke**, or even suicide.
- 4 **Legal & practical safeguards**
 - **Real Estate Alert System** — SMS alert to family for any mortgage/transfer.
 - **Bank frontline interception** — flagging unusual withdrawals + silent coaching calls.
 - **“Hang up and verify” rule** — don’t respond to unknown calls/SMS; verify via origin institution or 165 hotlines.
 - **More companionship** — regular family discussion of real cases helps seniors pre-think and pre-detect.

Final Thoughts

This is more than a story about scams — it’s a story about trust and the vulnerabilities of human nature.

Fraud groups now operate like corporations. They use AI and deepfake technology to fake voices, faces, and official identities, and they design emotional scripts that target our deepest weaknesses: fear, loneliness, greed, and the need to feel loved.

For victims, the harm is not only financial. Many lose their life savings, mortgage their homes, or fall into heavy debt. Some collapse under shame and suffer alone — even to the point of suicide. When families try to help, they are sometimes treated like enemies, leading to broken relationships and fractured homes.

That is why we cannot think “I’m too smart to be scammed.” Real protection starts with accepting that anyone can be fooled. Technology helps, but awareness, connection, and education protect even more. Check in on your loved ones, especially older adults. Share what you learn about new scams.

With vigilance and mutual support, we can protect what people spent a lifetime working for — and allow older adults to live safely and with dignity.

Reference Materials

YouTube Videos

1. “AI-Driven Scams — How Criminals Use Deepfake and Crypto”
Channel: Mirror News (鏡新聞) — YouTube(<https://youtu.be/SD-N2gBUru0?list=TLGGoMGQNI9UmQ4yMzEwMjAyNQ>)
2. “Older Adults Becoming Targets — Man in His 80s Lost All His Insurance Money”
Channel: TVBS NEWS — YouTube(https://youtu.be/J20f2Ib-zFI?list=TLGGwKm9FZ1_JUIyMzEwMjAyNQ)
3. Talk Show: “One Phone Call Can Take a Senior’s Life Savings”
Channel: 新聞挖挖哇！ —
YouTube(<https://youtu.be/6MiaUUSiIq8?list=TLGG4IPOBTU52yoyMzEwMjAyNQ>)
4. “Why Older Adults Still Get Scammed — Even With Life Experience?”
Channel: Formosa TV —
YouTube(<https://youtu.be/eYvV1hxtIzM?list=TLGGvcbtUJDOFTkyMzEwMjAyNQ>)
5. “Grandparents Becoming Money Mules — Two Seniors Arrested”

Channel: UDN Video —

YouTube(<https://youtu.be/zGiw6GKBqMw?list=TLGGY-YV9sCY9TwyMzEwMjAyNQ>)

6. “Phone and Message Scams Aimed at Seniors — How to Prevent Them”
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7. “Second-Round Fraud — 12 Seniors Lost 370 Million NTD”
Channel: TTV NEWS —
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8. “New Social Engineering Scams — Using Psychology and AI to Trick People”
Channel: Mirror News —
YouTube(<https://youtu.be/7DjeHDjDKb0?list=TLGGn269hL161CwyMzEwMjAyNQ>)
9. “Lawyer Jailed for Scamming a Lonely Senior — Stole 140 Million NTD”
Channel: 中視新聞 —
YouTube(https://youtu.be/eezF_wMaYil?list=TLGGYKND6BNTTMsyMzEwMjAyNQ)
10. “Scammers Run Like a Business — Using Ads and Social Media”
Channel: 商業周刊 —
YouTube(<https://youtu.be/afDHeTvral8?list=TLGGxYWCsybLwrQyMzEwMjAyNQ>)
11. “How to Recognize Scam Messages — Training for Seniors”
Channel: 小世界新聞 —
YouTube(https://youtu.be/kyvDfg_6avI?list=TLGG3hFIODVnCAyMzEwMjAyNQ)
12. “Family Members Share Real Stories About Elder Fraud”
Channel: PTS INNEWS (公視獨立特派員) —
YouTube(<https://youtu.be/LZorDixcXMk?list=TLGGG9rwsIGQfsIyMzEwMjAyNQ>)
13. Talk Show: “When Easy Money is Actually a Scam”

Channel: 震震有詞 —

YouTube(<https://youtu.be/3pzNkeSKiQA?list=TLGGyrVopvP6Df8yMzEwMjAyNQ>)

News and Fact-checking

1. MyGoPen Fact Check: “Viral Story About Elder Fraud Is Fake — Not a Real Case”(<https://www.mygopen.com/2025/09/fraud-7.html>)
2. News: Police Teach Seniors How to Avoid Fraud in Community Events
Source: Yahoo News Taiwan(<https://reurl.cc/oYOOaM>)
3. News: New Taipei Seniors Lost 200 Million NTD in Only Two Weeks
Source: Yahoo News (CTWANT / China Times:
<https://reurl.cc/qYMMEn>)
4. News: Alert System Saved a Senior’s House From Mortgage Fraud
Source: Liberty Times Real Estate
Section(<https://estate.ltn.com.tw/article/24633>)