



# Fathers' alcohol use and spousal abuse and mothers' child abuse in multicultural families in South Korea: The mediating role of acculturation and parenting stress



Jaekyoung Lee<sup>a</sup>, RaeHyuck Lee<sup>b</sup>, Myungsook Park<sup>c,\*</sup>

<sup>a</sup> Department of Social Welfare, Changshin University, 262, Paryong-ro, MasanHoiwon-gu, Changwon-si, Gyeongsangnam-do 51352, South Korea

<sup>b</sup> College of Hyang-seol Nanum, Soonchunhyang University, 22, Soonchunhyang-ro, Sinchang-myeon, Asan-si, Chungcheongnam-do 31538, South Korea

<sup>c</sup> Department of Social Welfare, Sangji University, 83, Sangjidae-gil, Usan-dong, Wonju-si, Gangwon-do 26339, South Korea

## ARTICLE INFO

### Article history:

Received 26 August 2015

Received in revised form 30 January 2016

Accepted 1 February 2016

Available online 3 February 2016

### Keywords:

Child abuse

Multicultural families

Alcohol use

Spousal abuse

Acculturation stress

Parenting stress

## ABSTRACT

There is a potential high risk for child abuse by foreign-born mothers in multicultural families in Korea, particularly given that they experience acculturation and parenting stress at the same time. Further, the risk for child abuse by foreign-born mothers may be aggravated through the high rate of alcohol abuse among Korean husbands that may increase their spousal abuse and in turn the mothers' acculturation and parenting stress. Therefore, this study examined the associations between Korean fathers' alcohol use and spousal abuse and foreign-born mothers' child abuse in multicultural families, with particular attention to investigating whether foreign-born mothers' acculturation and parenting stress mediated the associations. This study overall found that fathers' alcohol use was directly associated with their spousal abuse, and that fathers' spousal abuse was directly associated with mothers' acculturation stress and child abuse. Further, this study found a full mediation path in which fathers' alcohol use was associated with mothers' child abuse through fathers' spousal abuse. Fathers' spousal abuse was also associated with mothers' parenting stress through mothers' acculturation stress, and mothers' acculturation stress was associated with their child abuse through their parenting stress. The findings of this study provide social work implications for child abuse in multicultural families in Korea.

© 2016 Elsevier Ltd. All rights reserved.

## 1. Introduction

In 2014, 24,387 multicultural families (defined in this study as a Korean husband, a foreign-born wife, and their children) were formed by international marriage, which accounted for about 8% of all marriages in South Korea (hereafter, Korea; *Statistics Korea, 2015*). Generally, multicultural couples form a marital relationship that usually forces foreign-born wives to be integrated into Korean society unilaterally and thus shifts the responsibility of child rearing solely to the wives (*Chang & Park, 2010; Kim, 2006a; Park & Lee, 2014*). With this demographic change, child abuse in multicultural families has increased recently in Korea. The 2011 Korean National Survey on Child Abuse showed that about 4% of the total child abuse cases were reported from multicultural families and, more importantly, the rate in the use of child protection services for multicultural families was more than doubled for other families (*National Child Protection Agency [NCPA], 2012*). In particular, child abuse in multicultural families is an important issue in that it mainly occurs by biological parents who have low parenting skills (over 40% of the total child abuse cases in multicultural

families) and causes a range of socio-emotional and behavioral problems (e.g., anxiety, hyperactivity, attachment, aggression, and school maladjustment) for abused children themselves (*NCPA, 2012*). Therefore, it is important to understand which and how parental factors are associated with child abuse in multicultural families in Korea.

Grounded by the stress process model (*Pearlin, Lieberman, Menaghan, & Mullan, 1981*), this study explains foreign-born mothers' child abuse in multicultural families as an outcome through a process of interconnectedness among relevant factors causing stress to the mothers, including fathers' alcohol use as a background factor, fathers' spousal abuse as a main stressor, and mothers' acculturation and parenting stress as mediators. Within this theoretical framework, there would be several possible mechanisms that connect fathers' alcohol use to their foreign-born wives' child abuse. For example, fathers' alcohol use may increase their spousal abuse, which may in turn increase their foreign-born mothers' acculturation and parenting stress, and such increased levels of foreign-born mothers' stress may be associated with increased levels of their child abuse. These mechanisms are explained in details below.

Foreign-born wives in multicultural families in Korea experience multiple types of stress at the same time. Basically, foreign-born wives' adapting process to Korean life could be a source of stress (*Choi, Lee, Shin, Choi, & Kim, 2008; Han, 2006; Kim, 2006a*). In addition, foreign-

\* Corresponding author.

E-mail addresses: [good-man0424@hanmail.net](mailto:good-man0424@hanmail.net) (J. Lee), [raehyucklee@sch.ac.kr](mailto:raehyucklee@sch.ac.kr) (R. Lee), [mspark@sangji.ac.kr](mailto:mspark@sangji.ac.kr) (M. Park).

born wives are likely to experience parenting stress because multicultural families in Korea are mainly formed by intermarriages and thus most of the families have children (Kim, Oh, Yoon, & Lee, 2009; Yang, Kim, & Lee, 2007). Much evidence has shown that parents who experience high levels of parenting stress are a typical risk factor for child abuse (Crouch & Behl, 2001; Haskett, Smith, Willoughby, Ahern, & Nears, 2006; Lee, 2005; Lee & Han, 2003; Ministry of Health and Welfare [MHW], 2011; Rodriguez & Green, 1997). In particular, due to the Korean traditional value that emphasizes the role of mothers in child rearing (Kim & Kang, 1997), this study would expect that foreign-born mothers in multicultural families in Korea are more likely to experience parenting stress, which in turn could increase the risk of child abuse.

Together with parenting stress, foreign-born mothers in multicultural families in Korea also experience acculturation stress (Park, 2014; Yang et al., 2007). It has been well-documented that acculturation process (i.e., the process of cultural and psychological change through interactions between cultures) causes psychological difficulties in a way that accompanies multiple fatiguing experiences, such as anxiety and depression (Berry, 1997; Berry, Kim, Minde, & Mok, 1987). In particular, foreign-born wives in multicultural families in Korea are likely to experience severe acculturation stress since their intermarriages are mainly made by marriage brokers with lack of information about Korean society as well as their Korean husbands (Chung & Yoo, 2013). Research has identified diverse problems that foreign-born brides experience in Korea due to cultural differences, such as marital conflict and tension with their in-laws (Kang, 1999; Kim, Yoo, Lee, & Chung, 2006; Koo, 2007; Yang et al., 2007). Therefore, given that culture is an important resource for child rearing since it is closely related to parenting attitudes and practices (Affi, 2007; Lee, 2009; Xu, Tung, & Dunaway, 2000), foreign-born mothers experiencing stress in the process of integrating into Korean society could be adversary associated with their child abuse, particularly when combined with parenting stress.

Since the degree of stress that parents experience is related with the use of punitive parenting tactics (Lee & Han, 2003), foreign-born mothers' child abuse likely increases when they are failing to appropriately address their acculturation and parenting stress (Yeo, 2008). In addition, given that not enough are social support systems to assist foreign-born mothers in settling down in Korean society and in raising their children (Park, 2014), the risk of child abuse by the mothers is likely aggravated due to the double jeopardy of experiencing acculturation and parenting stress simultaneously. Therefore, this study would expect that foreign-born mothers' acculturation and parenting stress are adversary associated with their child abuse.

Domestic violence (i.e., abusive behaviors by Korean husbands including verbal, physical, emotional, and economic abuse and neglect) is also considered as a key risk factor for child abuse in Korea. According to the 2007 Korean Domestic Violence Survey (Ministry of Gender Equality and Family [MGEF], 2008), about 40% of married couples aged between 19 and 65 reported that they experienced diverse forms of domestic violence, which was particularly problematic in that victimized wives reported more severe mental and physical injuries than their husbands. When it comes to multicultural families, the rate of domestic violence was even higher, which was about 50% (Choi, Kim-Goh, & Yoon, 2013; MGEF, 2008). It has been widely known that domestic violence results in severe sequelae for victimized wives, such as depression, anxiety, post-traumatic disorder, dissociative disorder, and self-harming behaviors, all of which are harmful to child rearing (Shin & Choi, 2006; Stewart & Robinson, 1998). More importantly, the most dangerous one of the sequelae of domestic violence is that victimized mothers also abuse their children due to anger that they cannot express toward their husbands (Shin & Choi, 2006). Foreign-born wives in multicultural families in Korea are particularly vulnerable for domestic violence since they usually have no one to help them without their husbands, and in addition legal and institutional systems are not yet sufficient (Chong, 2010; Kim & Choi, 2011). Furthermore, studies have pointed out that patriarchy and cultural differences in Korean society

are a main cause of domestic violence in multicultural families, which in turn results in increasing acculturation stress among foreign-born mothers in a way that hinders their cultural adaptation by experiencing multiple difficulties at the same time, for example, domestic violence along with social discrimination and lack of social support (Chang & Park, 2010; Kim, 2006b). Therefore, fathers' spousal abuse in multicultural families in Korea may increase their foreign-born wives' acculturation and parenting stress and in turn the wives' child abuse.

Moreover, fathers' alcohol use is considered as another important risk factor for child abuse in multicultural families in Korea. In Korea, about 78% of Korean male adults were drinkers and about 30% of male adults between 30 and 50 years old were high-risk drinkers (MHW, 2010). In general, in Korea the rate of domestic violence by husbands increased from 25% to 40% when combined with the husbands' alcohol use (MGEF, 2012). Consistently, many studies have pointed out adverse associations between husbands' alcohol use and their spousal abuse in the general population in Korea (Cha & Shin, 2012; Cho, 2011; Jang, 2006, 2010; Kim, 1998; Yoon & Cho, 2012). This is also true for multicultural families. A study reported that about half of foreign-born wives living in 9 cities in Korea experienced domestic violence by their Korean husbands, and the main trigger for domestic violence was the husbands' drinking (Yoon, Choi, & Kim, 2013). Domestic violence by Korean husbands who also abuse alcohol is particularly risky given Korean drinking culture that is tolerant of drunkenness among male adults (Chung, Lee, & Kim, 2009; Kim, 2002; Moon, 2003), as well as Korean patriarchal culture that tolerantly accepts violence by husbands toward their wives (Chong, 2010). More importantly, parental alcohol use, particularly paternal use, is adversary associated with parental child abuse in Korea (Cho, 2011; Lee & Park, 2014) as well as in the United States (Guterman, Lee, Lee, Waldfoegel, & Rathouz, 2009; Nair, Schuler, Black, Kettinger, & Harrington, 2003).

Therefore, this study would expect Korean fathers' alcohol use to be directly associated with child abuse by their foreign-born wives in multicultural families, and to be indirectly associated with child abuse by increasing their spousal abuse that, in turn, may aggravate their foreign-born wives' acculturation and parenting stress.

## 2. The present study

Taken together, there is a potential high risk for child abuse by foreign-born mothers in multicultural families in Korea, particularly given that they experience acculturation and parenting stress at the same time. Further, the risk for child abuse by foreign-born mothers may be aggravated through the high rate of alcohol abuse among Korean husbands that may increase their spousal abuse and in turn the mothers' acculturation and parenting stress. However, as examined above, while the links between fathers' alcohol use and spousal abuse and between mothers' abuse experience and child abuse are well-documented, little is known about the mechanisms of how all these factors are associated with foreign-born mothers' child abuse in multicultural families in Korea. Even scarcer in this topic is research examining the role of foreign-born mothers' acculturation stress. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to address the following research questions examining the associations between fathers' alcohol use and spousal abuse and their foreign-born wives' child abuse in multicultural families in Korea, with particular attention to investigating whether the foreign-born wives' acculturation and parenting stress mediate the associations.

First, is Korean fathers' alcohol use associated with their spousal abuse in multicultural families in Korea? Based on empirical evidence (Cha & Shin, 2012; Cho, 2011; Jang, 2006, 2010; Kim, 1998; Yoon & Cho, 2012), this study hypothesizes that fathers' alcohol use will be associated with higher levels of their spousal abuse.

Second, are Korean fathers' alcohol use and spousal abuse associated with their foreign-born wives' acculturation and parenting stress and child abuse? The theoretical framework of this study, which considers fathers' alcohol use as a background factor causing stress to their

Download English Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/en/article/345853>

Download Persian Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/article/345853>

[Daneshyari.com](https://daneshyari.com)