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## Research Article

## Development of the Korean Paternal-Fetal Attachment Scale (K-PAFAS)

Nan Iee Noh, PhD, RN,<sup>1</sup> Hye-Ah Yeom, PhD, RN, ANP<sup>2,\*</sup><sup>1</sup> Department of Nursing, Gachon University, Incheon, South Korea<sup>2</sup> College of Nursing, The Catholic University of Korea, Seoul, South Korea

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## SUMMARY

**Purpose:** This study is a methodological study aimed to develop the Korean Paternal-Fetal Attachment Scale (K-PAFAS) to measure the level of attachment between the father and the expected baby, and to examine its validity and reliability.

**Methods:** The K-PAFAS was developed in four steps. The first step involved derivation of the initial items through review of the literature and in-depth interviews with 10 expectant fathers. The second step was the process of expert panel review, examining content validity for the initial items. In the third step, items were examined for their usability through a preliminary survey with 30 expectant fathers. As the last step, the final K-PAFAS was applied to 200 participants and examined for its psychometric profile.

**Results:** K-PAFAS consisted of 20 items, and used a 5-point Likert scale with the total score ranging from 20 points to 100 points. A higher score indicated a higher level of attachment between the father and his unborn child. The K-PAFAS was composed of four factors. The K-PAFAS demonstrated satisfactory criterion validity, which was supported by its significant correlations with the Paternal Antenatal Attachment Scale, the Korean Dyadic Adjustment Scale, and the Center for Epidemiological Studies–Depression Scale. The Cronbach  $\alpha$  of the K-PAFAS was .89. In test-retest reliability, the K-PAFAS showed a correlation coefficient of .91.

**Conclusion:** The K-PAFAS demonstrated initial validity and reliability. It was short, and relatively easy for use in evaluating the degree of paternal-fetal attachment in the antenatal management stage.

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## Introduction

Due to the recent increase in the number of nuclear family and women's participation in economic activities, a father coparenting his child is becoming more common in Korean society. The use of parental work leave by men has gradually increased in Korea [1], showing that fathers are now actively involved in parenting. It has been reported that a father's coparenting positively influences the development of the child's social skills and is associated with positive behavioral outcomes in the child [2,3]. A father's attachment with the fetus is known to be correlated with his attachment with the child at infant phase [4]. Thus, an expectant father's antenatal attachment with the unborn baby is assumed to have beneficial effects on the child after birth.

According to the theory of attachment behavior, an individual should experience close and keen relationships with the primary caregiver in early childhood to make a successful adjustment to the environment [5]. Specifically, an attached relationship with parents in the infant phase is a significant psychological factor that has a critical influence on the child's cognitive and social development and on a healthy social life when the child becomes an adult [2,3,5]. The attachment between parents and their unborn baby is naturally developed during the pregnancy period [6]. Antenatal attachment reflects parents' emotion and ideation toward the fetus and is denoted through their psychological, cognitive, and behavioral approach to the fetus [7].

From the standpoint of traditional Korean culture, a human being is regarded as a spiritual being from the moment of conception [8], and the psychological communications of the parent with the fetus, called *Taegyo*, are emphasized as essential efforts by the parent that aim at helping the fetus maintain the best antenatal developmental status during pregnancy [9]. In the traditional Korean society, *Taegyo* has been characterized as a

\* Correspondence to: Hye-Ah Yeom, PhD, RN, ANP, College of Nursing, The Catholic University of Korea, 222 Banpo-daero, Seocho-gu, Seoul, 137-701, South Korea.

E-mail address: [yha@catholic.ac.kr](mailto:yha@catholic.ac.kr)

concept that influences parents to have appropriate attitudes and morality regarding parenting and engage in the actual implementation of antenatal support for the fetus [10]. This spirit of *Taegyo* is still embedded in Korean people's lifestyle or inner philosophy in modern times. The Korean philosophy of *Taegyo* that regards the fetus as a unique human being from the moment of conception is based on parental affection with the fetus [11] and thus is conceptually related to the phenomenon of parental-fetal attachment that emphasizes consistent bonding interactions between parents and the fetus [12,13]. Specifically, *Taegyo* has not been confined only to the mother but has also been applied to the father, implying that attention to and support for the fetus during the antenatal period should be instantiated by the entire family, including the expectant father [8,10]. Therefore, when evaluating the level of paternal-fetal attachment among Koreans, the cultural notion of *Taegyo* should be considered.

Whereas previous research on parental antenatal attachment has predominantly focused on the attachment between the mother and the fetus, emphasizing maternal-fetal affective bonding [6,14], there is limited evidence on the relationship between the father and his unborn child. Along with labor and postnatal periods, prenatal period is one of the major fatherhood stages, and a psychologically demanding period for expectant fathers who experience transition to fatherhood [15,16]. During the prenatal period, fathers often experience feelings of unreality and perceived disequilibrium in relating with their partner, and make an identity shift from spouse to parent by reorganizing self as an expectant father [15]. Therefore, assessing the father's antenatal experiences is important for researchers and clinicians, as this could be related to positive perinatal and postnatal outcomes from the standpoint of family health.

In measuring paternal-fetal attachment, the Paternal-Fetal Attachment Scale (PFAS) [17] and Paternal Antenatal Attachment Scale (PAAS) [18] are used in most studies. The PFAS is revised from the maternal-fetal attachment scale [17] and developed on the assumption that the fetal attachment process by an expectant father is similar to that by an expectant mother [17]. Therefore, it is insufficient to measure the essential attributes of paternal-fetal attachment. The PAAS [18] includes both qualitative aspects (e.g., affection toward the fetus) and quantitative aspects of attachment (e.g., frequency of thoughts about the fetus) but does not place a large focus on actual paternal attitudes towards and behaviors related to paternal roles during the pregnancy period. In addition, these scales were developed in the context of Western cultures, implying a potential gap in their ability to reflect the patterns of paternal-fetal attachment in Korean culture. Existing instruments developed to assess paternal-fetal attachment from the perspective of Western culture thus have limitations in reflecting the traditional Korean paternal prenatal care for an unborn child in the context of Korean culture. Therefore, this study aims to develop the Korean paternal-fetal attachment scale (K-PAFAS) and examine its validity and reliability.

## Methods

### Study design

This is methodological research study aimed at developing the K-PAFAS to assess the level of paternal-fetal attachment and examining the validity and reliability of the scale.

### Setting and sample

Participants were a total of 230 men with pregnant spouse, including 30 participants for a pilot test and 200 participants for a large sample survey. The subjects were expectant fathers who were community-dwelling, aged 18 and above, and able to communicate

in Korean. The subjects were recruited from outpatient departments of maternity hospitals and midwifery clinics in Seoul, Korea.

### Scale development process

The K-PAFAS was developed in four steps based on the instrument development guidelines by DeVellis [19]: (a) generation of an item pool; (b) estimation of content validity; (c) preliminary survey; (d) testing of validity and reliability in a large sample survey (Figure 1).

#### Step 1: generation of an item pool

Step 1 involved a process of generating initial scale items through a review of the relevant literature and in-depth interviews with expectant fathers in order to clarify the concept of paternal-fetal attachment. The literature was searched using search engines including Research Information Sharing Service (RISS), Korean studies Information Service System (KISS), DBpia, PubMed, Embase, Cumulative Index to Nursing and Allied Health Literature (CINAHL), PsycInfo, ProQuest Nursing and Allied Health Source. Search of the literature was conducted using key words including attachment, paternal-fetal attachment, maternal-fetal attachment, antenatal attachment, expectant father, transition to parenthood, or parent-fetal relationship. As a result, a total of 70 studies on fetal attachment were searched and reviewed to generate the core attributes of paternal-fetal attachment.

In-depth interviews with expectant fathers were conducted to confirm the face validity of items proposed through the review of the literature and to explore the domain of paternal-fetal attachment. A convenience sample of 10 expectant fathers was recruited from outpatient departments at two maternity hospitals and two midwifery clinics in the metropolitan area of Seoul, Korea. The interviews were conducted from July to September 2015 in private

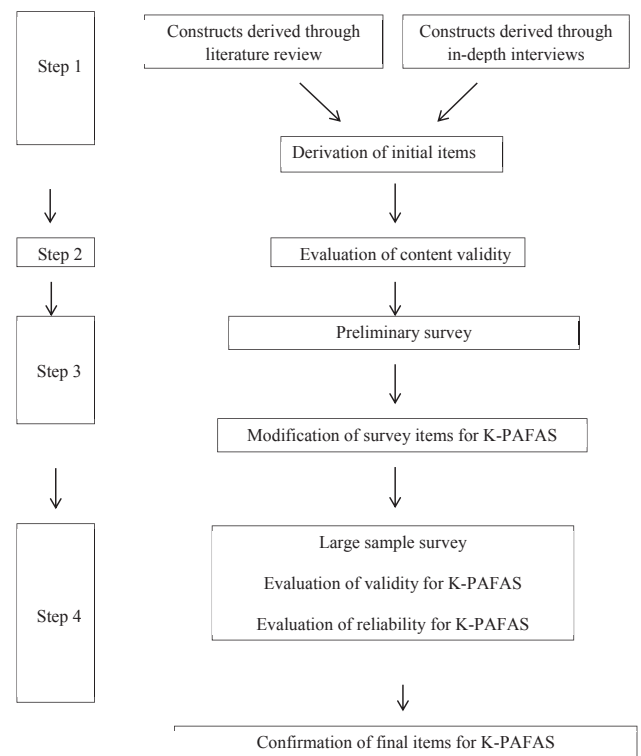


Figure 1. The K-PAFAS development process. Note. K-PAFAS = Korean Paternal-Fetal Attachment Scale.

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