



Adolescents in Multi-Ethnic Families under Korean Ethnic Nationalism

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Koreans believe that they form a nation, a “race,” and an ethnic group that shares a unified bloodline and distinct culture [1]. However, South Korea is becoming an increasingly multi-ethnic or multicultural society [2]. Foreign-born individuals accounted for 3.4% of the Korean population in 2015, and the percentage of foreigners in Korea is increasing yearly [2]. The number of naturalized citizens by marriage has been growing steadily, reaching 305,446 in 2015, and 83.1% of them are women [3]. Accordingly, the number of children in multicultural families is also increasing every year, and the number of adolescent secondary school students from multicultural families has increased [4].

Recently, the increasing number of students from multicultural families has brought researchers’ attention to multicultural family adolescents. Stress, sleeping hours, and physical activities have been reported to affect the subjective health status of adolescents in multicultural families [5]. Relationships among subjective health status and happiness in multicultural families’ adolescents have been reported [6]. According to an international study on adolescents from multicultural or immigrant families, smoking is more frequent among immigrant families’ adolescents in non-European countries than those in European countries [7]. Further, the frequency of obesity was found to be higher in adolescents of Hispanic immigrant families as compared to American adolescents [8], and the recommended rate of dietary intake is lower in immigrant families’ adolescents than those in Spanish adolescents [9]. A study found that variables correlated with acute infection differed between adolescents with immigrant parents and adolescents with non-immigrant background [10]. These studies suggest that adolescents with multicultural or immigrant families may differ in health behavior from adolescents in other families. Recently, a few studies have investigated adolescents’ health risk behaviors such as drinking and smoking between multicultural and non-immigrant Korean families [11,12]. However, little is known about general health behaviors in adolescents with multicultural families compared with adolescents in non-immigrant Korean families.

In the current issue of *Osong Public Health and Research Perspectives*, a study aimed to compare adolescents’ health behaviors and psychological status according to whether or not their mother was born in Korea [13].

The author utilized a nationally representative data from the 2015 Korean Youth Risk Behavior Web-based Survey. The self-administered questionnaire with computer measured socio-demographic variables and 15 health behaviors and psychological status. Data from 65,426 middle and high school students were analyzed. The authors have found that adolescents with foreign-

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born mothers had low levels of subjective happiness and high level of stress. The stress level of adolescents with foreign-born mothers could be affected by their multicultural background [13].

The author suggested that stress influencing factors of multicultural adolescents should be analyzed by comparing those of adolescents with non-immigrant Korean parents, and schools should make various efforts to protect multicultural adolescents by adopting mental health management programs led by school

nurses and counselors [13].

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

No potential conflict of interest relevant to this article was reported.

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