

## Effect of an Educational Program on Pre and Postpartum Self-Care and Parenting Knowledge and Parenting Efficacy of Marriage Immigrant Women in South Korea

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**Abstract:** This study has been attempted to identify the effects of educational program on pre and postpartum self-care and parenting knowledge and efficacy in married immigrant women in South Korea. The data collection period and pre and postpartum self-care and parenting educational program were between April 4 and August 27, 2016. Twenty married immigrant women participated in 4 times parenting educational programs. Data were analyzed using frequency analysis, paired t-test and Cronbach's alpha coefficients with the SPSS 18.0 for windows program. Following the programs there were significant increased in knowledge on pre and postpartum self-care ( $t = -2.31$ ,  $p = 0.033$ ) and parenting knowledge ( $t = -2.77$ ,  $p = 0.012$ ) and parenting efficacy ( $t = -6.71$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). The correlation between the pre and postpartum self-care knowledge, parenting knowledge and parenting efficacy in the subjects showed that there was a highly positive correlation between the pre and postpartum self-care knowledge and parenting knowledge ( $r = 0.741$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), the pre and postpartum self-care knowledge and parenting efficacy ( $r = 0.797$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) and the parenting knowledge and parenting efficacy ( $r = 0.934$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). Various studies need to be performed to develop programs that can promote pre and postpartum self-care and parenting knowledge and parenting efficacy for this population by reducing the difficulties they face.

**Key words:** Education program, efficacy, knowledge, parenting, self-care, parenting efficacy

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### INTRODUCTION

International marriages within Korea are increasing at a rapid rate and transforming Korea into a multicultural society. As of 2015, more than 120,485 immigrants through marriage resided in Korea with 101,203 of these immigrants female (Anonymous, 2017). The most common countries of origin of female immigrants through marriage were Vietnam, China, the Philippines and Cambodia, among others (Anonymous, 2017).

Many female immigrants who have immigrated to Korea through marriage tend to experience marriage, pregnancy and childbirth in a relatively short period of time (Kim *et al.*, 2011). Among these immigrants, it is believed that a certain number experience pregnancy and childbirth within one year of marriage (Tsai *et al.*, 2011). For women, pregnancy and childbirth are new and important experiences but can be stressful to undergo in a foreign country. Along with marriage, pregnancy and bearing a child give women the responsibility of continuing a family and this duty is often taken on before many of the women have received the opportunity to adapt to their host country and its culture (Yang *et al.*, 2010). Female immigrants are found to undergo many adversities from the beginning of their marriage and

experience significantly more stress in relation to raising a child following its birth (Tsai *et al.*, 2011). Many female immigrants are not provided with adequate education regarding their pregnancy, raising a child and their own health owing to complications involving financial limitations, language barriers, difficulties in communicating with medical staff, transportation limitations and more (Yang *et al.*, 2010). These realities not only limit the immigrants and their ability to manage their own health but also impact their ability to care for their children and adapt to their new role as mothers. Most female immigrants are young have never lived in another country or culture and are not aware of the host country's culture regarding childrearing which causes depression and inability to adapt, interferes with the healthy upbringing of children and is detrimental to the family and to the immigrant's ability to adapt to Korean culture (Huang and Mathers, 2008; Tsai *et al.*, 2011). As such, the provision of opportunities to instill both confidence and the information needed to allow female immigrants to maintain their health as well as raise their children is necessary (Wang *et al.*, 2012).

In this study, an educational program was implemented to provide information to female immigrants regarding raising a child as well as taking care of one's

health during and after pregnancy. By means of increasing awareness of the aforementioned matters and enhancing the effectiveness of raising a child, the study researchers hope to contribute to the development of healthy multicultural families by strengthening the ability of female immigrants to care for their health and raise their children safely.

**MATERIALS AND METHODS**

**Instruments:** The scale employed in this study to measure pre and postpartum self-care and parenting knowledge and parenting efficacy was developed (Kwak and Lee, 1996) and it was partially corrected and applied to this study. The Cronbach’s  $\alpha$  was 0.903, 0.779 and 0.710, respectively.

**Sample and data collection:** A one-group pre-test and post-test quasi-experimental design was used. The subjects of this study, 24 mothers were recruited through convenience sampling in the Daejeon Multicultural Family Support Center. The educational program on pre and postpartum self-care and parenting knowledge developed (Jeon and Hwang, 2013; Jeon *et al.*, 2013) was revised and implemented for a total of 4 weeks, 2 h per week. This study was starting in April 4, 2016. The data were collected from the 20 subjects who understood the purpose of this study before and after the educational program and consented to participation in the study. Table 1 shows the contents of the educational program.

**Statistical analysis:** The collected data were analyzed with the SPSS 18.0. A frequency analysis was done for the general characteristics of the education subjects. Paired t-test was done to test for the effects of an educational program on pre and postpartum self-care knowledge, parenting knowledge and parenting efficacy before and

after education. The internal consistency of the measuring tool was ensured with Cronbach’s  $\alpha$  and a Pearson correlation coefficient was calculated to check the relationships between the on pre and postpartum self-care knowledge, parenting knowledge and parenting efficacy.

**RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

**General characteristics:** The general characteristics were presented in Table 2. About 45.0% were 26-30 years, 30.0% were 21-25 years and 20.0% were 31-35 years. Most of them were Vietnamese with 55.0% of subjects. About 50% had been living in Korea for <5 years and their religion were 25.0% each from Catholicism, Buddhism and no religion. With regard to the education of the subjects, 50.0% of the subjects were high school and 25.0% were more than college. With respect to the delivery of the subjects, 40.0% of the subjects were one time and two times.

**Effects of an educational program on pre and postpartum self-care knowledge, parenting knowledge and parenting efficacy:** Effects of an educational program on pre and postpartum self-care knowledge, parenting knowledge and parenting efficacy are presented in Table 3. There was significant differences in the pre and postpartum self-care knowledge ( $t = -2.31, p = 0.033$ ), the parenting knowledge ( $t = -2.77, p = 0.012$ ) and parenting efficacy ( $t = -6.71, p < 0.001$ ). All of pre and postpartum self-care knowledge, parenting knowledge and parenting efficacy showed higher after than before training effectiveness.

**Correlation of the pre and postpartum self-care knowledge, parenting knowledge and parenting efficacy:** The correlation between the pre and postpartum self-care knowledge, parenting knowledge and parenting efficacy

Table 1: Overview of the educational program

Sessions	Time (min)	Contents and learning activities
<b>1st session</b>		
Pregnancy management	120	Signs and symptoms of pregnancy Precautions by gestational age Precautions during pregnancy: diet, rest, activities, exercises, etc.
<b>2nd session</b>		
Delivery Preparation and postpartum management	120	Preparations of delivery Postpartum self-care: nutrition, bathing, exercise, perineal care, sexual activities signs for visiting hospitals, etc.
<b>3rd session</b>		
Newborn bathing and feeding Newborn health management	120	Breast feeding method, merit, storage, etc. Bottle feeding method, preparation, etc. Normal characteristics of newborn and care Health screening practice
<b>4th session</b>		
Child health management	120	Normal child growth and development process Immunization schedule, category

Table 2: General characteristics (N = 20)

Characteristics/Categories	n (%)
<b>Age (years)</b>	
21~25	6 (30.0)
26~30	9 (45.0)
31~35	4 (20.0)
36~40	1 (5.0)
<b>Homeland</b>	
China	2 (10.0)
Vietnam	11 (55.0)
Philippine	6 (30.0)
Japan	1 (5.0)
<b>Residual</b>	
1~5	10 (50.0)
<b>Religion</b>	
Christian	4 (20.0)
Catholicism	5 (25.0)
Buddhism	5 (25.0)
None	5 (25.0)
other	1 (5.0)
<b>Educational</b>	
Junior high school	5 (20.0)
High school	10 (50.0)
More than college	5 (25.0)
Vocational state	
Yes	1 (5.0)
No	19 (95.0)
<b>Delivery</b>	
None	1 (5.0)
One time	8 (40.0)
Two times	8 (40.0)
Three times	3 (15.0)

Table 3: Effects of an educational program on pre and postpartum self-care knowledge, parenting knowledge and parenting efficacy (N = 20)

Variables	Before education		t-values	p-values
	(M±SD)	(M±SD)		
Self-care knowledge	2.46±0.35	3.09±0.42	-2.31	0.033
Parenting knowledge	2.62±0.76	3.13±0.43	-2.77	0.012
Parenting efficacy	2.71±0.35	3.16±0.29	-6.71	<0.001

Table 4: Correlation of the pre and postpartum self-care knowledge, parenting knowledge and parenting efficacy

Variables	Self-care	Parenting knowledge	Parenting efficacy
Self-care	1		
Parenting	0.741***	1	
Parenting	0.797***	0.934***	1

\*\*\*p<0.001

in the subjects was analyzed in Table 4. The result showed that there was a highly positive correlation between the pre and postpartum self-care knowledge and parenting knowledge ( $r = 0.741, p < 0.001$ ), the pre and postpartum self-care knowledge and parenting efficacy ( $r = 0.797, p < 0.001$ ) and the parenting knowledge and parenting efficacy ( $r = 0.934, p < 0.001$ ).

The findings of this study showed that the four week educational program on maintaining health before and after childbirth that was provided to female immigrants delivered statistically significant results. Following application of the educational program, female immigrant's awareness of childbirth-related information and planning

showed a significant increase compared to before they had received the instruction (Wang *et al.*, 2012). As the educational program was conducted with a small class of female immigrants there was more support from the immigrants, a factor that allowed for an environment in which active involvement was recommended with attendance and educational effectiveness found to be at high levels. Conducting the educational program in groups showed a positive effect similar to that achieved with the general educational program (Wang *et al.*, 2012). These results show that an educational program must consider the language and informational level and accessibility of the immigrants as well as the appropriate number of people in the program in order to be more effective. In addition, female immigrants were found to have a lower level of information in comparison to pregnant women from the host country and an educational program that provides them with a wide variety of information regarding pregnancy, childbirth, preparation, family planning and other related subjects needs to be developed and implemented (Lin *et al.*, 2008).

The study findings also demonstrated that the increase in immigrant's knowledge regarding effective child care after participating in the educational program was statistically significant. This result supports the conclusion that knowledge regarding effective child care increased and the burden of child care decreased in individuals after they took part in the program (Jeon *et al.*, 2013). The educational program was found to be an effective intermediary approach in providing an increased amount of information and educational impact. As such, the development of different educational programs regarding child care support according to different developmental stages of children is needed. According to previous research results, female immigrants face the dual burden of being an immigrant and a mother (Song *et al.*, 2016). They are flustered by unintended pregnancies from the beginning of their marriage and experience a lack of information and support with regard to child care and pregnancy (Chung, 2010). Moreover, the cultural differences due to immigration have been reported as having a profound effect in women's changing of roles as mothers (Liamputtong, 2006). Becoming a mother constitutes a significant adjustment in one's life and living as a mother in a different country and culture thrusts immigrants into a complex situation in which many different challenges are innately involved (Liamputtong, 2006). The immigrants do not have the luxury of receiving support from the family at home and cannot request help from people nearby owing to the language barrier (Song *et al.*, 2016). This is the main reason why many female immigrants experience difficulty

related to being unprepared for pregnancy and childbirth, however, support from individuals within Korea enables them to adapt more quickly to Korea and strengthens their ability to function in the role of a mother (Song *et al.*, 2016). A support system that provides information and support regarding child care, pregnancy and childbirth and is suited for female immigrants is necessary. In addition as the mental health and methods of child care differ according to nationality (Chou, 2010), a separate educational program that takes into consideration the differences between nationalities needs to be developed. Simultaneously, an educational program that is practical and also includes child care methods of the country in which female immigrants grew up is also needed (Benza and Liamputtong, 2014; Liamputtong, 2006; Song *et al.*, 2016). Through these efforts, more attention and support should be invested in enabling female immigrants to adapt to their role as mothers raising their children in Korea. This assistance will not only allow female immigrants to adapt more quickly to Korean society but also enable multicultural families to adapt to Korea quickly and contribute to the establishment of a healthy and just Korean society.

### CONCLUSION

By implementing an educational program for female immigrants and increasing the effectiveness of immigrant's abilities to provide care for their children as well as their knowledge regarding maintenance of their health before and after childbirth, the study was able to provide the necessary support to female immigrants from the beginning of their process of adapting to Korea. Moreover, the small class size allowed each student to better understand the educational content and the opportunity provided for students to speak to and support one another allowed for increased participation, attendance and educational impact.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

In the future, for a more effective educational program, the development of pamphlets or Apps. in addition to class material would allow students to reinforce content presented during class. Furthermore, identifying different methods to maintain the effects of education will be important. The development of educational programs for female immigrants who have lived in Korea for a prolonged period of time and are raising children is also needed and identifying methods of inviting such women to participate and providing practical education and information needed by these women is

deemed to be essential to such efforts. The present study will be used as a basis for health professionals and social workers in the creation of policies related to female immigrants and in the planning of educational programs. It is also, hoped that the results of this study will contribute to the promotion of the development and implementation of diverse educational programs that enable female immigrants to obtain additional knowledge in different areas as well. As this study was conducted among a small number of female immigrants from certain regions there are limitations in generalizing the results of this study.

Future research on the effects of the implementation and development of different educational programs that are needed for female immigrants in Korea according to their period of residence is recommended. In addition, as there are differences regarding child care according to immigrants and their nationalities, research to determine exact differences in child care according to nationality is deemed necessary.

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