

Exploring the relationship between food environment and dietary quality in marriage immigrant women in the metropolitan area of Seoul, South Korea

Ji-Yun Hwang(jiyunhk@smu.ac.kr), Sung-Min Yook

Department of Foodservice Management and Nutrition, Sangmyung University, Seoul, Korea

Abstract

Although the food environment of marriage immigrant women, which changes rapidly after immigration, may affect dietary quality, few previous studies have been carried out about the relationship. Therefore, this study was to investigate the relationship between food environment and dietary quality measured by the Nutrition Quotient for adults (NQ-A) in marriage immigrant women in the metropolitan area of Seoul, South Korea. The questionnaire was developed by review of previous studies, qualitative interviews (marriage immigrant women and experts) and a pilot field-test. A total of 159 marriage immigrant women from Vietnam, China, Japan, Cambodia, Mongolia, Taiwan and Russia was classified into the two groups according to the NQ-A scores: 'good' (n=56) and 'required monitoring' (n=103). The data were analyzed using the SPSS version 23.0 statistical package, and statistical significance was set at an alpha level of 0.05. The 'good' group had higher scored on the cost of food purchase in a month ('good' \$681 vs 'required monitoring' \$560, $P=0.040$) and the total score of family support for healthy eating ('good' 20.6/25 vs 'required monitoring' 18.2/25, $P<0.001$). The percentages of food security ('good' 51.8% vs 'required monitoring' 23.3%, $P=0.001$) and food inventory status assessed by the reported number of food groups at home during last one week ('good' 73.2% vs 'required monitoring' 41.7%, $P=0.001$) were also greater in the 'good' group. Our results suggest that family and social supports are essential for improving the diet quality of marriage immigrant women. Further study is needed to determine what characteristics of food environment influence dietary quality so that evidence-based, targeted interventions to improve dietary quality can be developed. [This study was supported by the grant from National Research Foundation of Korea (2017R1A2B1011821).]

Keywords: *marriage immigrant, food environment, dietary quality, social support*

Biography

I am an assistant professor of Department of Foodservice Management and Nutrition at Sangmyung University, Seoul, Korea. My overall research areas are theory- and evidence-based nutrition education, development of knowledge for interventions to improve nutrition of the underprivileged using epidemiology and qualitative methods, evaluation of effectiveness of nutrition programs and policies, and dietary factors related to chronic diseases.