

Exercise Involvement Among Korean Midlife Immigrant Women in the U.S.
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Exercise, a prime example of physical activity, is known to improve the general functioning of young and middle-aged women. More is to be learned, however, about the personal and physical conditions and parameters that predict the amount of exercise in a woman's daily life.

Purpose: This study examines a group of Korean midlife immigrant women to determine the relationships, if any, among the characteristics and experiences of the individual women, their behavior-specific cognitions and effects, and the degree that the women are involved in exercise.

Method: A nonprobability sample of 147 participants was recruited from Korean American communities in Texas, California, and New York. Participants were recruited both off line and on line. For off-line recruitment, flyer advertisements were posted on bulletin boards in Korean grocery stores and Korean ethnic churches. In addition, informal community leaders who had close contact with Korean immigrant women were consulted for referrals to women likely to be interested in this study. For on-line recruitment, advertisements were posted on a bulletin board at a Korean immigrant women's website visited by over 20,000 women. Descriptive statistics (frequency, means, and standard deviation), bivariate and multivariate correlations, and a series of regression analyses were used to analyze the research data.

Findings: The mean age of the participants was 47.1 years ($SD = 6.1$), and their average education was 14.5 years ($SD = 2.9$). The length of residency in the U.S. ranged from 11 months to 450 months, with an average of 180.5 months ($SD = 113.0$). The most frequently reported forms of exercise were swimming, golf, and walking. The amount of exercise was not significantly correlated with length of residency in the U.S. ($r = -.02$, $p = .810$). Participation in exercise was significantly predicted by age, education, perceived benefits, perceived barriers, and self-efficacy ($F(5,139) = 19.386$; $p = .000$; $R^2 = .411$). Exercise self-efficacy had a mediation effect on the relationship between participation in sports and exercise and the perceived benefits of exercise. About 35 percent of the variation in participation of sports and exercise was explained by perceived benefits and self-efficacy, while 20 percent was explained by perceived benefits alone. After controlling for the effect of self-efficacy on participation in sports and exercise, however, the analysis showed that only 5 percent of the variance was explained by perceived benefits, which was 15 percent less than before.

Discussion: Korean immigrant women who are more educated and older are more likely to involve themselves in exercise. Significant predictors of involvement in exercise among are higher values for perceived benefits and self-efficacy and lower values for perceived barriers. In addition, though some women perceived benefits from exercise, unless they also had high self-efficacy, the higher scores in perceived benefits were not strongly related to participation in exercise. This study may give direction to future studies into the direct and indirect relationships that predict whether Korean immigrant women will participate in exercise.