

Conjugal Violence in Korean American Families: A Residue of the Cultural Tradition

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The study explored the incidence of spouse abuse in Korean American families and interrelations between conjugal violence, marital power structure, stress, and socioeconomic and cultural factors. Rate of conjugal violence in these families is higher than those for other Asian American families. Data were collected from 256 families selected at random. In male dominant couples, rate of severe violence, wife beating, was four times higher than that of egalitarian couples. Husbands who experienced higher levels of stress had a greater rate of assaulting their wives. Wives in egalitarian and female dominant couples experienced a lower amount of stress and shared more decision-making power than did those in the male dominant couples. The longer the couples had been in the United States and the more American education they had received, the more egalitarian and female-dominant marital relations they tended to have. The residual influence of the traditional culture, in which they lived prior to immigration, is a factor suggesting why men were more abusive than women. Cultural differences associated with conjugal violence and needs for services are discussed.

KEY WORDS: spouse abuse; conjugal violence; Korean Americans; cultural factors.

Violence between husbands and wives has not always been viewed as a serious problem. Historically, physical punishment by husbands against their wives has been accepted as a way of maintaining domestic authority in different cultures.

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In recent years, however, there has been an increase in public awareness of domestic violence owing in large part to the women's movements of the 1970's with their emphasis on balancing the power relations between women and men (Martin, 1976; Levinson, 1989; Mitchel, 1992). More research is being devoted to the topic (Dobash *et al.*, 1992; Heise, 1994; Hutchison and Hirschel, 1998). Although a number of micro-level and psychoanalytic studies on conjugal violence have been carried out, the impact of cultural and social and structural factors on this problem has been largely neglected. Research indicates that rates of domestic violence are higher in communities of color (Holtsworth-Murroe *et al.*, 1997), but rarely have researchers empirically addressed the question of why this is so, probably because the influence of the cultural context in which individual couples are embedded is difficult to study (Levinson, 1989; Yllo, 1984a). Hence, information on cultural differences in conjugal violence is limited. In order to understand such differences on domestic violence, it is important to conduct investigations in different societies.

Korean Americans form an Asian American minority, most of whom immigrated to this country over the last few decades. There are about 1.3 million Korean Americans (Kwack, 1991). The U.S. Census showed that the number of Korean Americans has doubled between 1980 and 1990. Many of them, particularly men, still yearn for and adhere to their traditional Korean family system, in which males are valued and expected to govern the family. As minority members of their adopted society, many of them experience occupational and economic stresses caused by multiple difficulties including language barrier, inadequate prior education, discrimination, inability to adjust to the mainstream culture, and downward mobility. With their patriarchal family structure and socio-structural stressors, they are likely to have an increased risk of conjugal violence between marital partners (Straus and Gelles, 1990; Farrington, 1980). In fact, according to the Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD), one-half of the reported spouse abuse cases among Asian Americans in Los Angeles came from Korean American families (Chosen Ilbo, 1992). About 35% of the abused Asian women in shelters were Korean Americans. Most of them had been in the United States for less than 10 years. Nearly 2,000 spouse abuse cases among these families were reported annually to the LAPD. This number is twice as high as that for Chinese Americans and Japanese Americans. Around 740 of the Korean abusers had been arrested for assault (Chosen Ilbo, 1990). The number of Korean American spouse abuse cases reported to the LAPD increased by 10% between April 1991 and March 1992 (Chosun Ilbo, 1991, 1992). We assume that a similarly large amount of conjugal violence takes place among Korean American families in other areas in the United States as well. To date, however, there has been little systematic

research of such a serious issue of Korean American minorities (Yim, 1979; Song, 1996). Consequently, data on conjugal violence among them is extremely limited.

The objective of the present study was to explore conjugal violence in Korean American families. Specifically, the study was designed to estimate incidence of conjugal violence in these families, to analyze the factors that might contribute to conjugal violence, to discuss cultural differences associated with conjugal violence, and to suggest services for families affected by domestic violence.

Since there is no comprehensive theory dealing specifically with family violence in the Korean American family, this study drew its theoretical framework mainly from Straus and Gelles' general theory of family violence (1980a, 1990). Their papers, a comprehensive and systematic study of domestic violence, have been widely quoted and their research method and instrument have been adopted by many researchers and professionals. Hence, the present study replicates their National Family Violence Studies (Straus and Gelles, 1980a, 1986, 1990) in Korean American communities.

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Because the possible causes of conjugal violence are complex and diverse, no single approach would be able to adequately explain it. The present study applied dual theoretical perspectives: cultural perspectives and interactional perspectives.

The cultural perspective based on patriarchal theory (Goode, 1971; Martin, 1976; Straus and Gelles, 1980a; Yllo, 1984a, 1993) views patriarchy as a major cause of intra-family violence, especially husband-to-wife violence. This theory asserts that most societies, in which males are traditionally highly valued and expected to govern the family, have viewed husband-to-wife authority as a cultural trait. Two rare studies of wife abuse among Asian Americans support this perspective. Song (1996) reported that Korean American women with more traditional Korean cultural values experienced more abuse by their husbands than those who were less traditional. Bui and Morash (1998) also reported that the traditional gender norm of Vietnamese Americans was significantly correlated with physical and emotional abuse by a husband. These studies support the above cultural perspective.

In violent marital relations, the higher-status man is usually more powerful and violent, and the lower-status woman is the less powerful and abused (Gerber, 1991). Power structure affects the relationship between conflict and violence. Coleman and Straus (1990) found that when conflict occurs in an asymmetrical power structure (the male dominant and female-

dominant types), there is a much greater risk of violence than when conflict occurs among the egalitarian couples. Similar findings were reported by Yllo (1984b; 1993). Although the causal direction between marital power and couple violence has not been clearly defined, most empirical studies suggest that egalitarian couples are less likely to be exposed to the risk of violence than the cases of asymmetrical power structures (Coleman and Straus, 1990). With an understanding of such relations between the balance of marital power and couple violence in families, the present study examined whether a similar pattern existed in Korean American families.

Meanwhile, the interactional perspective based on general stress theory (Straus and Gelles, 1980, 1990) has found that there is a strong relationship between the level of violence between husband and wife and potential stressors or stress-generating factors, (e.g., low income, unemployment, marital conflict, children's education, health problem, and family size). This theory predicts that a family, which encounters a high level of stress and manages stress poorly, has a greater potential for frustration and domestic violence (Farrington, 1980).

It is expected that these perspectives—cultural and interactional—combined would explain conjugal violence more inclusively.

Stress is one of the major contributing factors in intra-family violence (Farrington, 1980; Gelles, 1985; Straus, 1990). Most studies examined the relationship between marital friction and one source of stress, e.g., work stress or parental stress, and tended to ignore the multiplicity and diversity of stressors experienced by an individual (MacEwen and Barling, 1988). Most Korean immigrants encounter multiple stressors in the new cultural context, such as language barriers, children's education, employment problems, discrimination, alienation, etc. (Choy, 1979; Kim, 1981; Kim and Morales, 1988). The definition of stress used here treated stress as a function of the interaction between the subjectively defined demands of a situation and the capabilities of an individual or group to respond to these demands. Stress exists when the subjectively experienced demands are inconsistent with response capabilities (Straus, 1990). Taking into consideration this background, the present study examined the relationship between multiple stressors encountered by an individual and spousal violence.

METHOD

For methodological consistency with the National Family Violence Studies (Straus and Gelles, 1980a, 1990), the present study employed the measurements of marital power, conjugal violence, and stress, and the scoring procedures used in those studies.

The method developed by Blood and Wolfe (Coleman and Straus, 1990) was adopted, which determines for the assessment of marital power structure, the independent variable in the present study. Using this method, we determined who has decision-making power in the family by asking "Who has the final say?" Each couple is classified into one of the following four marital power types based on the result from cross-classifying Decision Power Index by Shared Power Index (Straus and Gelles, 1980b, 1990): egalitarian: making decisions jointly (the husband and wife have equal say in most issues); divided power: dividing responsibility for decisions (husband and wife are dominant in making decisions in decisions in different areas, e.g., the husband has the final say in certain issues whereas the wife has the final say in other issues.); female dominance; and male dominance.

Conflict Tactic Scales (CTS) (Straus, 1979, 1980b) were adopted for the measurement of conjugal violence, the dependent variable.

In order to assess the impact of stress on family violence, the modified version of the Holmes and Rahe Stressful Life Events Scale was used. The scale consists of 18 stressful life events that might have occurred during the last year. The present study added four more items of stressful events to this scale, all associated with cultural difficulties relevant to Korean immigrants, i.e., language barrier, discrimination, differences in values experienced between parents and children, and criminal victimization.

Data were obtained by telephone interviews with Korean Americans in the city of Chicago and the New York area, specifically Queens, which contained the largest Korean population on the East Coast. According to the Korean Consul Generals in Chicago and New York, the Korean American population in the Chicago area including its suburbs was estimated at 70,000, and the population in the New York area was about 200,000.

One hundred husbands were contacted by the authors who had experience in working with husbands with reticence to discuss their violence and tendency to minimize it. Of the 100 cases or telephone calls made, only 69 cooperated with the authors for interview. Of these interviewed, 23 were excluded due to the insufficient content of their responses. Each respondent was explained that their telephone number was selected at random and the interview was strictly confidential. An in-depth interview was conducted to understand the context of domestic violence. The interview schedule included open-ended and close-ended questions to elicit both quantitative data on personal characteristics and violence, and their beliefs about woman's social status in the family.

Thus, altogether 256 cases or households—46 husband-to-wife violence cases and 210 nonviolent cases—were selected from the two areas on the East Coast of the United States. Due to resource constraints, the areas on the West Coast, including the Los Angeles area, was not included in this

study. The sampling procedure was based upon that used in the National Family Violence Survey (Straus and Gelles, 1990). At each household, a male 18 years of age or older was interviewed, who was presently married or presently living as a male-female couple. We selected only one gender, husband or male partner, due to time constraints. The rationale for interviewing husbands was the importance of social stress experienced by the male perpetrator. Straus (1990) reported that Szinovacz's analysis of agreement between spouses found almost identical violence index rates regardless of the sex of the respondent. The sample was selected using a two-step procedure. First, a list of Korean Americans with Korean surnames was compiled based on telephone directories of respective cities. Second, a simple random sample of 500 households was selected from each list. Oversampling was done for non-violent cases in expectation of refusals and unreachable respondents. Interviews lasted an average of 20 min and were conducted during 8 p.m. ~10 p.m. on weekends.

Age of the husbands in the sample range from 26 to 84 years with the mean age of 45. Mean age of their wives is 42. All the husbands were born in Korea. Average number of years they lived in the United States is 9.8 years. Thus, the majority of them lived for many years in Korea before emigration. Average length of their marriage is 17 years; 41% have lived with their current spouses for 10 years or less. Average number of their children is 1.9. Among the husbands, 52% received college or graduate education, and 41% of their wives had four or more years of college education. The median income for the families in this study is over \$45,000, which is higher than that of most other minority groups.

ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

Nearly 19% of Korean American couples experienced at least one incident of relatively minor physical assaults during the year (Table I), e.g., threw something, pushed, grabbed, shoved, or slapped. However, 6.3% were cases of severe assault, e.g., kicked, bit or hit with a fist; hit or tried to hit with something; beat up the other one; threatened with a knife or gun; used a knife or gun. Remarkably, rates of 'any violence' were 18.5% in 1975 and 18.7% in 1985, respectively, for all Americans, almost identical to that of our Korean survey. Also, the severe violence rates of 7.6% in 1975 and 6.4% in 1985 were similar to the 6.3% in our survey. However, the present study revealed that violence rates differed significantly according to the gender of the perpetrator.

Thus, almost one out of five husbands committed at least one assault during the year. With this rate, we might estimate that about 36,000 wives

Table I. Annual Violence Incidence Rates Between Husband and Wife in National Survey in 1975 and 1985, and Korean Survey in 1993

Type of Violence	Rates of Incidences (%)		
	U.S. National		Korean American 1993
	1975	1985	
ANY violence between couple during the year	18.5	18.7	18.8 (48) ^a
SEVERE violence	7.6	6.4	6.3 (16)
ANY violence by the husband	15.1	12.2	18.0 (46)
SEVERE violence by the husband	3.9	1.5	6.3 (16)
ANY violence by the wife	13.7	15.0	8.2 (21)
SEVERE violence by the wife	6.6	5.8	.8 (2)

^aFigure in parentheses = *N*.

experienced one or more physical assaults by their husbands. However, rate of severe violence by husbands (6.3%), which Straus and Gelles defined as “wife beating,” suggests that more than 6 out of 100 wives were beaten by their husbands in the year. Applying this rate, we might estimate that 12,600 Korean American wives in the United States were beaten by their husbands. Rate of 6.3% in severe violence by husband is four times higher than that (1.5%) reported by the 1985 Family Violence Study. The data imply that violence in Korean American families was perpetrated mostly by husbands and that wives were beaten and did not retaliate. We might regard these rates of violent incidence as minimum estimates since perpetrators tend to underreport their own assaultive behavior.

As expected, male-dominant marriages had the highest level of any violence with 33% of them experiencing at least one incidence of physical assault during the year. In contrast to this, only 12% of egalitarian marriages experienced some incident of physical violence. These data suggest that 1 out of 3 husbands in the male-dominant marriages carried out 1 or more violent acts against his wife compared to about 1 out of 10 husbands in the egalitarian marriages. However, the most remarkable statistic is the severe violence perpetrated by husbands of the male-dominant marriages (11.3%), which is over four times higher than that (2.7%) of the egalitarian ones.

Table II presents results of a logistic regression analysis which suggest that, compared to egalitarian couples, female dominant couples and male dominant couples are respectively associated with an increased likelihood of husband-to-wife violence. Results further suggest that male dominant couples had the highest occurrence of conjugal violence.

Table II. Logistic Regression: Husband to Wife any Violence with Marital Power Structure

Marital Power Type	Variables in the Equation				
	<i>N</i>	Exp. (B)	B	S.E.	Sig.
Marital power type	216	—	—	—	.017*
Equalitarian (reference)	58	1.000	—	—	—
Divided power	49	1.422	.352	.51	.489
Female dominant	38	1.464	.381	.54	.485
Male dominant	57	3.642	1.292	.44	.003**

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$.

In terms of education, fewer wives in male dominant marriages had college education than in female dominant couples (24% vs. 54%). There was a significant difference in the husband's education attained in the United States: about 35% of the husbands in the egalitarian couples, 32% in the female dominant couples, 29% in the divided power couples, and 16% in the male dominant couples completed college or graduate school in the United States. Thus, male dominant couples had a lower level of college education.

In regard to marital power types, there were no significant differences in the following areas: husband's and wife's mean age, length of marriage, length of residence in the United States, number of relatives living within one-hour distance from the couple, and annual income. However, mean annual family income of the female dominant couples was \$55,000 and the other three groups had a lower mean family income (\$45,000). The female dominant couples had a higher mean family income; 43% of them had a small business. The length of residence in the United States was weakly related to the marital power types. However, the female dominant couples had higher mean lengths of residence (husband 11.5 years and wife 11.2 years), whereas the male dominant ones had lower mean lengths (husband 9.5 years and wife 8.3 years).

The stressors measured in this study included only the so-called "stressor stimuli" (Straus, 1990). There was a wide range of stressors experienced among the 256 families. Only 3.4% had encountered none of these problems, whereas the number of maximum stressors faced by any families was 13 out of 22 stressful experiences. Scores on the stressors ranged from 0 to 22, with a mean of 5.4 (Table III). This suggests that, on average, the Korean Americans had encountered 5 stressful life events in the preceding year.

The majority of the families (70%) reported that they had faced occupational and economic stress, which was positively associated with language barrier ($r = .336$, $p < .001$) and discrimination ($r = .356$, $p < .001$). This finding is consistent with the Connecticut Study (Kim and Morales, 1988),

Table III. Life Stress

Life Stress	N	%
1. Trouble with boss	98	40.7
2. Trouble with other people at work	133	55.2
3. Got laid off or fired from work	54	21.1
4. Got arrested or convicted or something serious	16	6.5
5. Death of someone close	79	32.1
6. Foreclosure of a mortgage or loan	17	6.9
7. Being pregnant or having a child born	33	13.4
8. Serious sickness or injury	37	15.0
9. Serious problem with health or behavior of family member	46	18.7
10. Sexual difficulties	28	11.4
11. In-law troubles	54	12.1
12. A lot worse off financially	122	49.6
13. Separate or divorced	7	2.9
14. Big increase in arguments with spouse/partner	75	30.6
15. Big increase in hours worked or job responsibilities	49	20.0
16. Moved to different neighborhood or town	38	15.5
17. Child kicked out of school or suspended	6	2.5
18. Child got caught doing something illegal	2	0.8
19. Different values with children	44	18.1
20. Crime victim	55	22.5
21. Discriminated against in housing, or in any other way	131	53.7
22. Difficulties in speaking English	183	75.0

in which 90% of Korean Americans cited language and discrimination as their major difficulties.

High stress couples had the highest level of any violence; 38% of the high stress couples experienced a physical assault during the year. On the other hand, only 2% of the low stress couples experienced such an assault. Nearly 39% of the husbands who had high stress committed one or more violent acts against their wives compared to less than one out of 66 husbands who had a low level of stress.

None of the husbands in the low stress families committed a severe assault against his wife. In contrast to this, rate of severe violence or wife beating by the husbands in the high stress families was 16.3%. Each additional stressor increased the chance of wife abuse.

Table IV presents the result of a logistic regression analysis, where the independent variable is “level of stress” with categorical variables and the dependent variable is “violent incidents, husband to wife.” The coefficients for both variables are positive suggesting that, compared to the low stress couples, the high stress couples are associated with an increased likelihood of husband-to-wife violence.

In order to gain insight into how stress was related to violence, we examined interrelation of stress, marital power, and conjugal violence in

Table IV. Logistic Regression: Husband to Wife any Violence with The Level of Stress

Level of Stress	Variables in Equation				
	N	Exp. (B)	B	S.E	Sig.
Level of Stress (continuous)		1.4674	.3835	.07	.0001**
Level of Stress	238		(categorical)		.0001**
1. Low (reference)	66	1.000	—	—	—
2. Medium	92	7.7764	2.0511	.76	.0072**
3. High	80	21.8711	3.0852	.76	.0001**

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$.

relation to the length of residence, education, and income. Table V shows that the egalitarian couples had the lowest percentage and the male dominant couples had the highest percentage in the high stress category.

There is negative correlations between length of residence and the level of stress ($r = .145$, $p < .01$), and between the length of residence and the rate of violence ($r = -.147$, $p < .01$). The correlation between length of residence and the level of cultural stress is $r = -.262$ ($p < .0001$) for husbands and $r = -.221$ ($p < .0001$) for wives. The male dominant couples had the highest mean score for occupational plus economic stress (2.48). Otherwise, the female dominant (1.81) and the egalitarian couples (1.80) had respectively a similar mean score for occupational and economical stress. The husband's education and the wife's education were associated with the level of stress, i.e., the more they were educated in the United States, the more easily they adjusted their lives to the new setting by overcoming the language barrier and cultural difficulties. Impressively, these couples had less socioeconomic stress. A husband's income was not associated with level of stress. The men were under socio-economic stress regardless of how much they earned. Over half of them responded that they would be more satisfied with their economic and work status they held back in Korea.

Table V. Marital Power Structure by the Level of Stress^a

Marital Power Type	Level of Stress (%)				
	N	Low	Medium	High	Mean
Egalitarian	70	31.9	46.4	21.7	4.7
Divided power	53	28.3	45.3	26.4	4.8
Female dominant	41	41.5	24.4	34.1	4.7
Male dominant	60	15.5	48.3	36.2	5.8
Total	223	29.0	42.0	29.0	5.0

^a $p < .05$.

Table VI. Violence Rate by Marital Power and the Level of Stress

Marital Power Type	Level of Stress (%)		
	Low	Medium	High
Egalitarian	3.1	14.2	3.1
Divided power	4.6	17.0	35.6
Female dominant	4.2	16.0	33.0
Male dominant	8.7	29.8	58.8

The violence rate among male dominant couples was the highest (Table VI). Over half (58.8%) of the husbands among the male dominant couples physically assaulted their wives when the families experienced a high level of stress. The divided power couples had the second highest rate of violence (35.6%). The violence rate for female dominant couples, when they experienced a high level of stress, is 33%. The rate for the egalitarian couples is much lower than that of the male dominant ones.

DISCUSSION

The present study explored incidence of conjugal violence among Korean American families as a function of the power structure of marriage, the level of stress, cultural influence, and socioeconomic factors. Using a sample of 256 families, the analysis focused on assaults by husbands upon their wives because these assaults represent the most serious problem of domestic violence. Male dominant marriages had the highest level of any violence. A remarkable finding is that the rate of wife beating—violence by the husbands of the male-dominant marriages—was over four times higher than that of egalitarian marriages.

In agreement with Straus and Gelles (1990), our findings suggest that stress does increase the likelihood of family violence. Husbands who experienced higher levels of stress had a higher rate of assaulting their wives than did those who experienced lower levels of stress.

Korean culture emphasizes family harmony which is in most cases maintained through hierarchical relationships. Traditionally, a husband as the head of the family has authority to control family affairs and regulate relationships among family members. He consequently has the right to use interventions including physical measures. Cross-cultural studies suggest that wife abuse is a common practice in many traditionally patriarchal societies, such as countries in Asia (Bui and Morash, 1998; Song, 1998; Gallin, 1992; Levinson, 1989). The residual influence of traditional culture

may suggest why men are more violent than women in the Korean American families.

Many Korean immigrants came to the United States with relatively high socioeconomic status, and some of them were also highly educated in America. Nearly half of the sample responded that there was an inconsistency between their education and occupational achievements. As compared with occupations they held in Korea, they experienced downward mobility, especially in the early years after immigration. Many immigrant professionals and skilled workers were underpaid because their technical skills were inappropriate for the American job market (Kim and Morales, 1988). To compensate for cultural and socioeconomic difficulties, they tend to work hard. This work ethic brings economic success to many families. However, Korean parents' high participation in economic activities brings about another serious problem. The majority of them do not have time to spend with their children. Since their children go to American schools and play with American friends, there are growing gaps in values and communication between parents and children. Such economic, occupational, and cultural stressors make it difficult for many Korean American families to maintain a healthy family life.

Both egalitarian and female dominant couples experienced a lower amount of stress compared to male dominant ones who experienced the highest level of occupational and economic stress. In a traditional Korean family, the father, as the head of the family, is expected to govern and financially support the family. This suggests that husbands among the male dominant couples are under occupational and economic stress, even though they dominate power in decision making. Wives in the female dominant couples and the egalitarian couples shared more power in decision making and more of the socio-economic burden with their husbands. These findings support the proposition that couples in long-lasting marriages were able to establish complementarity in task performance, a sense of equitability and shared power (Walsh, 1990: 267–285).

It is worth noting that the longer the Korean American couples have been in the United States and the more American education they have received, the more easily they adjusted their lives in American society. These couples have less socio-economic stress. Although the husband's income did not have a significant association with the level of stress, the couple's satisfaction with economic and work status is associated with the low rate of conjugal violence.

Culture-rooted attitudes and behaviors are difficult, if not resistant, to change. The case of the Korean American men is no exception. Most of them, who have lived their adult life in the traditional Korean cultural context prior to immigration, have difficulty in changing their male-domi-

nated or male-chauvinistic attitudes and behaviors. However, findings seem to reflect the movement among the Korean American husbands as well as their wives toward a more egalitarian and less male-dominant marital life. Such movement reflects the effort of couples to adapt to the mainstream culture. The authors are convinced that the primary factors that enabled the couples to initiate and maintain a new style of marital life were higher education and longer residence in the United States, which allow for a greater degree of influence of egalitarian western culture via mass media and contacts with other Americans. This further contributes to the gradual movement toward the adoption of a new life style that reflects American egalitarian culture and thought (Yoo and Sung, 1997).

The findings from our study reject the traditional belief that the male dominant family has marital harmony and a happy family life. Around 80% of the each marital power type, except for the male-dominant couples, felt positively about their marriages. Violence was high among male dominant couples who experienced a high level of stress. Male abusers tend to adhere to a traditional patriarchal system. Many Korean husbands believe that changing the traditional male dominant power structure will threaten marital harmony.

Interventions which mitigate this traditional power structure will be advantageous in maintaining harmonies in Korean American families.

These findings suggest that conjugal violence is associated with these families for multidimensional reasons. However, this study gives some implications for prevention and intervention for family violence. First of all, they must be counseled that family harmony can effectively be developed through egalitarian relationships rather than hierarchical ones. Intervention should primarily consider stressor stimuli and stress management. Intervention programs, which help male abusers identify sources of stress and to control stress and aggressive behavior through "time-out" and "self-talk" techniques, would seem beneficial (Koval *et al.*, 1982). But Koreans have a strong tendency to confide their family problems only to close kin or intimate friends. Consequently, some of them would rather hide such marital problems. This culture-rooted behavior creates problems for the professional care provider. Any service would have to be provided to them in conjunction with the family-centered approach. In order to better serve the needs of victims of family violence, community agencies, churches and domestic violence programs in Korean American communities must begin to work together on various strategies including intervention, prevention, and public education.

Future studies need to account for the severity of conjugal violence and the effects of this on children, and investigate coping skills appropriate to the value and the life style of Korean American families.

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