

## Review Article

# A Review of Current Research on Marital Violence and the Efficacy of Intervention in Korea\*

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Marital violence has been recognized as a serious social problem in South Korea (hereafter referred to as Korea) in recent years, which is reflected in domestic violence legislatures enacted in 1998. As a result, marital violence interventions (e.g., empowerment-based intervention) have been widely used in Korea. However, the efficacy of these interventions has not been systematically evaluated. Additionally, few researchers in Korea have examined evidence-based intervention for perpetrators of marital violence. As applied to Koreans, this paper examines current research on marital violence in Korea; interventions for victims and perpetrators, with particular focus on the applicability of empowerment-based intervention for Korean victims; and directions for research within the Korean context.

**Keywords:** marital violence, (South) Korea, intervention, feminism, women

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## Introduction

Cultural norms and family structure, in conjunction with the role of power and the dynamics within the interpersonal relationship and social expectations of marital roles, encourage marital violence (Stewart and Robinson 1998). Historically, women in patriarchal societies such as Korea have been victims of abuse in the home, arising from the notion that physical violence is a prerogative of men who are accorded the legal rights and authority to control all members of their families (Dobash and Dobash 1992). In patriarchal societies, women also have been traditionally regarded as the property of their men, and violence has been sanctioned (Stewart and Robinson 1998). The legally and religiously sanctioned patriarchal system not only has legitimized male dominance, but has made challenges to patriarchy unacceptable, tantamount to treason. The legal identity of the wife has been merged into that of the husband upon marriage and “the very being or legal existence of the woman [has been] suspended . . .” (Ryan 1996). As the *master* of the house, husbands have routinely exerted physical discipline as a way of preventing the “disruption of the *natural* (patriarchal) order.”

In response to the growing concerns regarding marital violence in Korea, battered women’s shelters and therapeutic interventions, such as group counseling, have proliferated in recent years. Battered women’s shelters and counseling appear to be the solution to the pervasive problem of marital violence. However, interventions for battered women in Korea, such as empowerment-based intervention, have not been systematically evaluated. The validity of such interventions is a critical concern. Are the techniques of empowerment-based intervention employed in Western countries appropriate for the victims of violence in Korea? This article examines the current studies on the issue of marital violence in Korea and interventions for Korean victims and perpetrators, with a particular focus on empowerment-based intervention. Directions for research on marital violence in Korea are also included.

## Background of Marital Violence in Korea

### *1. Women’s Rights Movements and the Formation of Family Violence Law*

I begin here with a brief overview of the history of the women’s rights movement in Korea, which set the precedent for the passage of the family

violence law and legal recognition of marital violence. Gender inequality has been pervasive in Korean society; marital violence was traditionally considered to be a “private matter” that would not warrant legal recourse. It was not until the 1970s that many women’s organizations in Korea started to raise awareness of violence against women, which set the precedent for domestic violence laws. During the 1980s, various groups of Korean women were actively involved in a social movement for women’s rights (Moon 2002), and the eventual passage of the *Sexual Equality in Employment Act* of 1989 (*Namnyŏ koyong p’yŏngdŭng pŏp*) (Shim et al. 1999). One of the underlying purposes of the women’s movement in Korea included addressing the problem of violence against women. In the 1990s, both traditional and progressive feminist groups formed a coalition to carry out rigorous lobbying campaigns, and major women’s organizations, such as the Korean Women’s Hotline (Yŏsŏng ŭi chŏnhwa), YWCA (Taehan YWCA yŏnhaphoe), the Korean National Mother’s Association (Taehan ōmŏni hoe), the Council of Women’s Group (Han’guk yŏsŏng tanch’e hyŏbŭihoe), and the Women’s Research Institute at Ewha Womans University (Ewha yŏja taehakkyo yŏsŏng yŏn’guwŏn), became involved in activities to address the problem of violence against women. The activities included public education concerning violence, and influencing law-makers in drafting legislation for human rights reform and revising the traditional family laws (Hahm and Guterman 2001).

In response to the growing concerns about domestic violence, the *Special Law to Prevent Domestic Violence and Protect the Victims* (*Kajŏng p’ongnyŏk pangji mit p’ihaeja poho e kwanhan pŏmnyul*) was enacted in 1998 (Kim and Emery 2003). The legislation was designed to prevent violence from occurring in the home (Doe 2000) and to enforce penalties, including restraining orders, limiting parental rights, and making offenders responsible for medical costs, property loss, or custodial care costs of victims, and rehabilitation for the perpetrators (Han’guk Kajok Munhwawŏn 2005; Kim and Kim 2002b). This law aimed to increase public awareness of marital violence. Unfortunately, despite the passage of the criminal law and the subsequent laws concerning marital violence and sexual assault, society has not recognized the need to safeguard human rights for women (Yi 2002). Thus, public awareness of violence against women has not improved noticeably.

## *2. Current Legal Definition of Family Violence in Korea*

What constitutes marital violence and spousal abuse in Korea? The most recent (2008) definition of “family violence” as outlined in the *Special Law to Prevent*

*Domestic Violence and Protect the Victims* is “an act that causes physical, mental, and financial harm, which results in criminally inclined violence, injury, malicious abandonment, abuse, child exploitation, arrest, imprisonment, threat, force, blackmail, and defamation of character” (Article 29, No. 8). In the U.S., the legal definition of “family violence,” according to the Office on Violence Against Women of the U.S. Department of Justice, includes physical, psychological, emotional, economical, and sexual abuse. Although there are similarities between the legal definitions in Korea and the U.S., there are also notable differences, particularly the “who” involved in family violence. In the U.S., previous legal definitions of “family violence” in research and policy had implied married couples; however, the recent definition has expanded to include intimate partners in shared residence who are not legally married (and same-sex couples). In Korea, however, the definition of family violence is predicated on the assumption that the “who” only involves married men and women, and not intimate partners. For this reason, I have employed the terms “marital violence” and “spousal abuse” rather than “family violence.”

Another remarkable difference between the legal definitions of family violence in the U.S. and Korea is “who is/are criminally charged as perpetrator?” In several states in the U.S. (e.g., Arizona), accomplices to spousal/partner abuse, including siblings, children, and relatives can also be charged with family violence. For example, relatives of the abusive husband can also be criminally charged, even though they had not directly participated in the abuse. In Korea, however, criminal charges are directed only against the abusive spouse, even though there have been numerous cases of mothers-in-law mistreating their daughter-in-law; conflicts between mothers-in-law and daughters-in-law is referred to as *kobu kaltŭng* in Korean.

## Review of Research on Marital Violence in Contemporary Korea

### 1. Prevalence of Marital Violence in Contemporary Korea

How serious is marital violence in Korea, and has the passage of the family violence law had any noticeable impact? According to a traditional Korean saying, “a dried pollack and a wife must be beaten once every three days” (*Pug’ŏ wa manura nŭn samil e han pŏn ssik p’ae chwŏ ya handa*). This saying reflects the justification for spousal abuse in Korea. Kim (2003) reviewed several studies conducted on national Korean samples that reveal the magnitude of this problem. In a 1983 survey, 14% of wives indicated that they

were beaten by their husbands. According to Shim (1992), from 1990 to 1991, 28.4% of 1,171 households surveyed suffered from marital violence. Among these, wife beating constituted 17.2%, while 4.4% involved husband beating, and 11.2% mutual violence. In a survey conducted in 1992, approximately 72% of married women reported experiencing an average of 13 violent episodes, and 68.9% were abused an average of 10.4 times. Research conducted six years later reported that 31.4% of Korean families experienced intimate-partner violence; 27.9% of wives reported being battered, while violence against husbands was 15.2%, and mutual violence was 12.3%. Kim (2007) found that from 1997 to 1999, marital violence was estimated at 31.4% to 34.1% respectively. Of these incidents, about 27.9% to 29.5% involved violence against wives; 15.8% to 17.7% of the cases identified husbands as victims; and 12.3% to 13.2% of the cases were mutual violence (Kim). In a more recent study conducted in 2000, 38.2% of the sample responded affirmatively to verbal abuse; 10.1% had experienced being slapped or pushed, and 0.3% had been beaten with a fist or an object. Kim's research, as well as other researchers (e.g., Doe 2000), confirm the high rates of marital violence among Korean couples.

These results, unfortunately, likely do not reflect the magnitude of the problem of marital violence in Korea, as the majority of the marital violence cases are kept hidden (Kim and Emery 2003). Shim and Hwang (2005) noted several barriers to help-seeking for Korean immigrants in the U.S. who are victims of spousal abuse. For example, people around the victim typically try to find fault in the victim's behavior when the victim reveals her abuse. They also found that victim-blaming was strongest when the victims take legal action. To my knowledge, few researchers have examined the cultural factors that influence attitudes concerning marital violence in Korea by family members and friends, as well as the public.

## *2. Marital Violence and Health & Mental Health Outcomes*

Some researchers in Korea have also examined the correlation between wife-beating and mental health problems. For example, in his study with 70 marital violence victims who were patients in a psychiatric unit, Kim (1985) found that the patients had experienced stress disorder (85.5%), depression (7%), and other types of mental distress (7.5%). Other mental health related problems identified include psychiatric numbing, hypersensitivity, suicidal ideation, guilt (towards husband), conversion symptoms, dissociative symptoms, psychosomatic ailments, self-harm, drinking, and epilepsy. In a more recent

study, which consisted of 426 married women in Kwangju – a large city in the south-west of Korea – who had both witnessed wife beating in their family of origin and experienced spousal abuse, Kim and Kim (2002b) found that victimization (both witnessing and experiencing abuse) had significant impact on married women's self-esteem. Additionally, victimization had the strongest impact on their self-esteem, and resulted in psychosomatic ailments such as fatigue, low self-esteem, confusion, and anxiety (Kim and Kim 2002b). To my knowledge, however, studies on the relationship between marital violence and mental health outcomes in Korea are few in number.

### *3. Marital Violence and Child Abuse: Continuing Cycle of Abuse*

In conjunction with the negative health and mental health outcomes, Doe (2000) found that a higher percentage of women in Korea who were abused by their husbands used harsh disciplining more often when punishing their own children (91.7%) than women who were not victims of violence (64.6%). This implies that marital violence can lead to child maltreatment, an extended form of family violence (Doe 2000). Several researchers in Korea have also examined the relationship between spousal abuse and child care. Sin Sŏngja (2001), for example, studied the relationship between wife beating and child care from a sample of 439 fifth-grade children in five different schools in Taegu, a major city in the south-east of Korea. The prevalence of domestic violence of various forms, and significant variables that contributed to spousal abuse and quality of child care were the focus of the study. She found that there was a negative relationship between spousal violence and the quality of child care. Yi (1989) explored the identification of wife abuse, results of several studies on marital violence, methods of violence perpetration, the frequency of wife-beating, and factors contributing to child abuse. She also examined the identification of child abuse, and results of empirical studies on violence against children. She found that wife abuse has a negative impact on children. Women who were abused by their husbands were likely to physically discipline their children. She concluded that in order to minimize violence in the family, public perception on violence from an individual problem to a social structural problem is necessary. She also argued that the public must recognize that a wife is not a property of her husband. "Social education" that fosters equality in family relationships has also been suggested.

#### *4. Impact of Marital Violence on Adolescent Behavior*

Many researchers in Korea investigated the effect of experiencing or witnessing marital violence between their parents on adolescent behavioral problems in school. A study by Kim and Pak (2002) examined the relationship between adolescents' violent behavior in school and witnessing violence at home, which included 54 high school students and 50 adolescents who were previously arrested. Their results indicated that experiencing family violence and witnessing spousal abuse at home were associated with violent behavioral tendencies in school. They also found that the strongest predictor of school violence was verbal abuse between parents. Yi and Chang (2000) also investigated the effects of marital violence on adolescent violent behavior from a sample of five high school students who were identified as perpetrators of violence and referred to Taegu District Public Prosecutors' Office (Taegu kōmch'alch'ōng). All the participants had experienced violence at home and witnessed violence between parents. In sum, students who had experienced or witnessed violence between parents manifested psychiatric disturbances and displayed risk factors that contributed to violence in school. Thus, the cycle of violence begins in homes with a high prevalence of violence and continues outside of the home.

#### **Interventions for Marital Violence Victims in Korea**

In response to the growing concerns about the problems of marital violence, the Ministry of Gender Equality and Family (Yōsōng kajokpu) has financially supported several marital violence counseling centers and domestic violence shelters. As of 2000, there are 282 marital violence counseling centers nationwide (Kim 2003). In addition to counseling centers, marital violence intervention programs for the victims have also proliferated in Korea. For example, Ch'oe (2006) evaluated a family therapy program for marital violence victims. The purpose of this program is to reduce stress associated with marital violence for victims and their children; to reinforce positive mother-child interaction; and to enhance family functioning. Using a sample of 30 women and their children in a family violence center in Seoul, this study included a pre-test, 24 weekly sessions, and post-test. The results indicated that the family therapy program has had positive effects on family functioning.

A handful of researchers asserted that on-line counseling and technology-

based services are effective intervention tools for the Korean victims of spousal abuse. Sin (2005) examined the problems of an inter-agency connection system of domestic violence related services. The participants in the study consisted of 114 domestic violence staff members from 88 counseling centers, 11 Women's Emergency Hotline 1366 (hotline for domestic violence victims), 13 victims' shelters, 20 Korean Women's Hotline, and 28 domestic violence protection agencies – all listed with the Ministry of Gender Equality and Family. They responded to a questionnaire, which was mailed out. According to the staff members, linkage with other agencies was absent due to the absence of formal agreements or understanding of how agencies function. They also reported that on-line service networks and information sharing through on-line networks (which includes detailed information concerning the victims, perpetrators, programs and interventions, follow-up results, and court order for perpetrators) were essential for providing effective services. Similarly, from their study of internet counseling for students who witness violence at home in Mokpo – a city on the southwestern coast of Korea – Ko and Paek (2003) asserted that it is necessary to maximize the utility of the net for preventing family violence and to expand internet services.

Empowerment-based intervention is one type of intervention which has been widely used in Korea in recent years. Many researchers and counselors in Korea have emphasized the need for feminist and empowerment-based intervention to assist battered women in recovery and in leading productive lives. Pak (1996) discussed effective empowerment practice for violence victims in coping with feelings of powerlessness and regaining control in an abusive relationship. She reviewed critical literature (mostly from the U.S.) on domestic violence, crisis intervention, and empowerment-based intervention. She also discussed a case that demonstrated disturbances in the psychological functioning of battered women. Pak concluded that the empowerment approach was proven to be effective in dealing with crisis and in changing coping skills for Korean victims. The validity of her conclusion however is in question, since this study primarily reviews literatures in the U.S. and includes only one case study.

Yi (2001) investigated a feminist-based support group for battered women. She stated that feminist-oriented shelters have played a leading role in services for marital violence victims. Additionally, many shelters prefer a feminist approach, which considers support group and strength-based empowerment approach as an important part of counseling. She examined a support group that consisted of eight sessions. The purposes of the program included increasing understanding of violence, fostering the ability to overcome physical



and mental burdens associated with violence, discovering strengths, examining alternative solutions, and building social networks. The sessions included meditation and stretching, discussion, and praise-time. She concluded that such support groups empower victims to solve their problems on their own, productively relieve their stress and discover their strengths. Although the study reported successful outcomes upon the termination of the last session, a follow-up session was absent. Moreover, this was a pilot study, which was aimed at developing a support group for battered women, and the author was the support group facilitator (and participant-observer). Ironically, the methods employed in this study (other than participant-observation) were not specified. Thus, it is difficult to establish an empirical support for the findings in this study.

According to Kim and Kim (2001), the empowerment-based intervention in Korea was first developed by in 1998, and consisted of social support, a strengths assessment, reducing self-blame, teaching realistic skills, and resource-pursuing activities. The program included ten sessions with emphasis on a *feminist* approach to education and training, in conjunction with healing of mental distress and trauma. The goal of the program was to assist battered women in reducing anxiety and depression and raising their self-esteem. The authors reported that the program increased the Korean victims' level of self-efficacy, self-esteem, and group identification. Similar to Yi's study (2001), a follow-up study, which would measure long-term outcomes, appears to be absent. Therefore, evidence-based support for the intervention is difficult to determine.

There are issues that have not been addressed in these studies, such as under-utilization and drop-out of services. Many Korean battered women rely less on health services, clinical programs, and marital violence shelters than American women. Kim and Kim found that under-utilization is a major problem, and many employees and staff members in Korean shelters have limited knowledge and expertise in counseling and treating victims of wife battering. Kim (2004) analyzed the current conditions of social service programs for battered women from data obtained from a sample of 462 women and 33 marital violence counselors in the metropolitan city of Kwangju and the Chönnam Provinces. She found that there is a need for education and training for counselors, in conjunction with financial support for local counseling centers, additional human resources, and systematic networking among related programs. Additionally, many women prematurely leave the shelter (Kim and Kim 2002a). Kong (1997) argued that about 90% of marital violence victims in Korea feel that they have no other choice but to return to

their home. This percentage is much higher than for battered women in the U.S., which is estimated at 46%. Many women with little or no job skills depend on their husbands financially, and women with children have few opportunities for employment (Morash et al. 1999). Lastly, many of the marital violence intervention methods in Korea were derived from Western societies, such as the U.S. Although successful outcomes were reported for victims of violence in the U.S. and the initial outcome appears positive in Korea too, the feasibility of these interventions is still of critical concern. The question remains: How feasible are these interventions, such as empowerment-based intervention, for Korean victims of marital violence?

### Feasibility of Empowerment-based Intervention for Korean Victims

Although researchers have found empowerment-based interventions to be effective for victims of marital violence in Western societies (Hattendorf and Tollerud 1997; McCloskey and Fraser 1997; Rinfret-Raynor and Cantin 1997; Schlee et al. 1998; Sharma 2001; Worell 2001), there are several limitations when applied to Korean victims. In particular, the feasibility of such interventions for non-Western victims of marital violence is in question. Empowerment-based interventions fail to acknowledge cultural differences of non-Western women. There is a tendency to over-generalize data gathered from the experiences of Western women, while overlooking the reality of non-Western women. Feminist therapists have been criticized for their emphasis on gender as a significant socio-cultural factor, while neglecting to incorporate cultural variability among women they represent. Moreover, most therapists have received training derived from traditional theories of psychological development and pathology based on the life conditions of the middle-class, white, heterosexual male (Sharma).

There were also several limitations to the applicability of empowerment-based interventions for marital violence victims in Korea. These programs did not effectively address the problems many battered Korean women encounter, such as remaining with their husband due to financial and other types of barriers. As I have mentioned earlier, leaving an abusive relationship is a major challenge for many Korean battered women with children, as well as women with low educational attainment and little or no marketable skills. To make matters worse, many of these victims may also find it difficult to attain self-sufficiency and pursue independent living, given that they lack social support

from relatives and friends. Because of the lack of viable alternatives, they have little or no other choice but to remain married to their abusive partner – their source of financial support.

These problems particularly apply to elderly victims of marital violence in Korea. Unlike many young women (in their twenties or thirties) who possess the educational background and job skills to break free from the abuse and live independently, elderly victims encounter barriers due to their lack of education and job skills. For these women, seeking divorce means losing access to spousal benefits, which means that they are likely to be prone to poverty (Sin Y. 2001). To my knowledge, however, few studies in Korea have examined the feasibility of marital violence intervention for elderly victims of marital violence. Moreover, the empowerment-based intervention does not address the problems of harassment and stalking after the relationship has been terminated. Although several U.S. researchers in recent years have examined the violence resulting from leaving an abusive marriage or relationship, such as ex-partner harassment and stalking, no such research could be located in Korea. Walker and Meloy (1998) noted that one of the most dangerous times in an abusive marriage or relationship is when the relationship is terminated. Palarea et al. (1999) compared the degree of intimacy of a victim-perpetrator relationship in 223 intimate (n = 135) and non-intimate (n = 88) stalking cases. They found that there was a significant relationship between the stalkers' intimate versus non-intimate status and violence committed. They concluded that intimate-relationship stalkers (e.g., ex-spouse, former boyfriend) used more dangerous stalking behaviors than non-intimate relationship stalkers (e.g., stranger). Burgess et al. (1997) compared marital violence perpetrators by whether they admitted to stalking behavior. Their results showed that if separation occurs, the perpetrator tries to maintain control through stalking, continuation of psychological abuse, financial intimidation, control of children, and threats to reputation. Some of these results may apply to Korea as well.

### Intervention for Batterers in Korea

The current legislation on marital violence, such as the *Special Law to Prevent Domestic Violence*, recognizes that wife battering is no longer a personal family matter. Rather, it should be understood in the context of a broader social problem and a crime, in which the court has the right to mandate a restraining order, limited child custody, community service and probation, and treatment referral, counseling and rehabilitation for the perpetrator (Sö and

Pak 2001). Recognizing the need for batterers' intervention, several batterers' intervention programs have been implemented in Korea. Kim Chaeyŏp's (2007) lengthy work on family violence in Korea included a proposal for a model batterers' program that is designed to assist perpetrators in understanding their responsibility for their violent acts. The model program consists of 8-12 sessions (two to three hours per session) and has been structured around the following topics: orientation and introduction to the group program; understanding the domestic violence prevention law and procedures; awareness of the factors leading to violence and solutions; aggression; building communication skills; and recognizing equality in a marital relationship. The results indicate that after the program, participants showed a significant reduction in stress level and increases in finding solutions to marital conflicts, non-controlling behaviors, and the perpetrators' awareness of the problem of spousal abuse.

In their study of clinical intervention for marital violence perpetrators for ceasing their violent tendency, Sö and Pak presented a diverse treatment modality and group intervention model for batterers. Their study included an analysis of the demographic information of 40 participants of the batterers' program and their self-reported evaluation of the program at a probation office in Suwŏn (a satellite city near Seoul). The program consisted of a joint treatment for cognitive change in violent behavior. The authors found that based on the responses of the participants, 37.5% of the respondents were "quite satisfied" with the program. When asked if they used violence after the program, 97.5% ( $n = 39$ ) answered "no," while only 2.5% ( $n = 1$ ) answered "yes." About 80% of the respondents ( $n = 32$ ) responded that the program was most helpful in "education on violence" and "anger management." Unfortunately, they did not determine any independent reports of the participants' stating that they did not engage in violence. Kim and Kim (2002a) conducted an experimental study of a marital violence offenders' intervention program, which was based on an integrated model. The group program was led by two therapists and consisted of eight sessions (four hours per session). The samples in their study included 47 perpetrators in the Kwangju and Chönnam areas. They found that the opinions of the participants concerning the program were affirmative; marital satisfaction, communication, and self-esteem were significantly increased after the program; and attitude toward abuse and hostility were reduced.

Despite the immediate successful outcomes reported in these studies, there are several limitations as well. Researchers on batterers' intervention have overlooked certain demographic variables, such as the age of the batterers. For

example, would middle-aged or elderly perpetrators be just as responsive to these interventions as their younger counterparts? Because wife beating was considered “culturally justified” in the past, attitudes toward violence against women may show considerable differences between younger and older generations. In such cases, the batterers’ intervention may need to be modified. Moreover, evidence-based support of the batterers’ programs appears to be absent in several of these studies, which should include a follow-up study that would evaluate the tendency for recidivism among batterers. Few Korean researchers (e.g., Kim and Kim 2002a) conducted an experimental study on a domestic violence intervention program that included a follow-up study.

### Rationale for the Review and Direction for Future Research

Many researchers on marital violence in Korea have examined the problems presented by spousal abuse and interventions that are designed to safeguard victims’ rights and maintain harmony in the family. Although the severity of the problems associated with spousal abuse call for greater evidence-based research and practice, there are several gaps in our knowledge concerning violence against women in Korea. Even though more victims of violence in recent years have taken legal actions or sought help (e.g., domestic violence shelters), few researchers have examined cultural factors, such as *ch’emyōn* (“loss of face”), that may pose a barrier to help-seeking. The lack of support may also be attributed to lack of public awareness of the problems of marital violence. Research on public awareness concerning violence against women could shed light on why there is a tendency of many victims to remain silent.

Korean researchers have reported successful outcomes from several interventions, particularly the empowerment-based intervention. Although the empowerment-based model has been widely used to assist victims in terminating an abusive relationship, it does not adequately address the consequences of leaving a violent relationship, such as repeated harassment, stalking, and intimidation perpetrated by an ex-spouse. Thus, research on the aftermath of marital termination is needed. Additionally, many studies on marital violence interventions have reported immediate outcomes rather than long-term effectiveness. Experimental research that includes a follow-up study is suggested.

On-line counseling services and intra-agency networks for violence victims have been found to be effective for domestic violence prevention and intervention. Known as the technology capital of the world, many Koreans

have access to the internet, which makes on-line counseling service and intra-agency networks feasible intervention tools for victims of abuse. Ironically, despite the reported efficacy, however, little is known about technology-based domestic violence programs and interventions. Greater research is also needed on on-line counseling and intra-agency networks. Regarding studies on batterers' intervention programs, many Korean researchers have overlooked salient demographic factors, such as age, which likely would influence attitude towards violence against women. For example, wife beating and violence against women may be viewed differently between the older and the younger generation. The older generation may perceive wife beating as "justifiable" and "necessary." Likewise, a study that includes a systematic evaluation of the long-term outcomes of programs for batterers has been absent in Korea. Therefore, researchers should also consider the demographic variables, as well as conducting a follow-up study that assesses the likelihood of recidivism among the batterers who complete the program.

Many interventions in Korea have not been evaluated for cultural validity. For example, the empowerment-based intervention programs in the U.S. have been derived from the life conditions of white, middle-class women, which overlooks cultural differences of non-Western women. Such a program may not be feasible for non-Western women, as well as Korean women. In order to establish the efficacy of marital violence intervention, a systematic evaluation of the outcomes as well as the cultural validity of the interventions must be considered. This article serves as an impetus for understanding the problem of marital violence and evaluating the efficacy of the current domestic violence interventions for Korean victims and perpetrators. It also contributes to the body of knowledge regarding the problems of marital violence and domestic violence interventions from a cross-cultural perspective. To my knowledge, there has not been any research in English that examines research on family violence within the Korean context, which may appear to suggest low incidence rates of violence in Korea (in comparison to Western societies) (Hahm and Guterman 2001). The article provides directions for Korean researchers in addressing the gap of knowledge concerning marital violence, which pose a barrier to effective intervention.

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