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BoRin Kim, Assistant Professor of Social Work, COLA travels to South Korea

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UNH Global

BoRin Kim

Assistant Professor of Social Work (COLA)

I am very grateful for the Global Education Center (formerly CIEGE) award, which provided financial support for my trip to South Korea. I visited Seoul, South Korea in December 2017 for four purposes: 1) attending the Korea Health Panel (KHP) conference, 2) conducting research/teaching collaboration meetings with scholars from the Institute of Social Welfare at Seoul National University (SNU), 3) providing a guest lecture in the Department of Social Welfare at SNU, and 4) visiting medical social workers at the Seoul National University Hospital (SNUH).

I am from South Korea, but I have not visited my home country very often, so my trip to South Korea supported by the Center was a great opportunity for me both to enhance my research and teaching collaborations with Korean scholars as well as to improve my understanding of social and health policies in South Korea on which some of my research focuses.



Presenting research at the 9th annual KHP conference

During my visit, I attended the 9th Korea Health Panel conference, and presented my research paper titled, “Trajectories of income status and changes in chronic conditions among older Koreans.” The Korea Health Panel (KHP) has a nationally representative data sample from 2008 and 2015. The KHP collects data every year, and as of now eight waves of data are available. The KHP includes a variety of variables related to health, health care expenditure, and utilization, as well as socio-economic

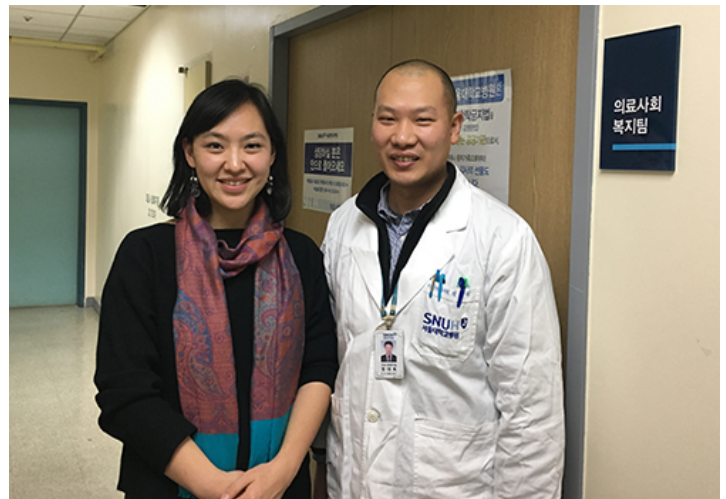
characteristics of respondents. KHP hosts an annual conference so that scholars who are using their panel data can exchange their research outcomes and further their research ideas. My research using all eight waves of the data found that long-term chronic poverty significantly increases chronic conditions among older adults. I was very excited to share my findings with scholars who are familiar with this data and to get their thoughtful feedback on my research. Also, it was a great chance to make connections with many Korean scholars in the field of social and health services.



(l. to r.) Dr. Kim and Dr. Sang-Hoon Ahn, Professor of Social Policy at SNU

My visit continued with the Institute of Social Welfare and the Department of Social Welfare at SNU. I completed my master's degree in social welfare Ppolicy at SNU in 2005, so I was very excited to visit my old professors, colleagues, and friends there. Many scholars at SNU were very interested in comparative studies on social and health policies across different developed countries. We discussed similarities and differences between the US and South Korea in social/health policies/services, especially for the older population, and forged new collaborations. I am looking forward to working with my old professors and friends! Also, I was invited to a class named, "welfare state strategies," and had a chance to talk about major social and health policies in the U.S. Students were very interested in the differences in social and health policies between the U.S. and South Korea, what caused the differences, and the outcomes caused by different policies.


Lastly, my visit to the medical social work team at SNUH was an opportunity for learning about medical social work and hospice services in South Korea. The number of social work students interested in medical social work has been increasing, and many of them have found jobs in the field of medical social work or are doing their internships in hospitals during their BSW or MSW programs. Every semester, I visit





some of my students interning in medical social (l. to r.) Dr. Kim and Daehee Jung, MSW, Medical Social work settings, and hope to develop a course of Worker at SNUH medical social work in the near future. SNUH is one of the biggest public hospitals in South Korea (independent from SNU, managed by the Korean government). I was able to learn the role of social work in a public hospital setting rather than in a non-profit hospital setting. Also, it was great to compare the programs they provide with those in New Hampshire. As a result of my visit to SNUH, Daehee Jung, a medical social worker at SNUH, has decided to visit New Hampshire this fall for his overseas training. My visit developed a shared understanding and initiated this and hopefully other collaborations.

Thank you again to the Global Education Center for supporting my travel to South Korea and my efforts for teaching and research collaborations.

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