

Physical Health, Depression and Related Factors for Elementary School Students in Seoul, South Korea

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Abstract : Background: The health status of school-age children has a great influence on their growth and life-long health. The purposes of this study were to identify physical and mental health status of late school-age children in Seoul, South Korea and to investigate the related factors for their health. Methods: After gaining the approval from Institutional Review Board (IRB), a cross-sectional study was conducted with elementary students in grade 4 or 5. Questionnaires were distributed to eight elementary schools located different regions of Seoul in November, 2016, and 302 participants were finally included. From all participants, informed consents from the parents, and assents from children were received. Children's socioeconomic status, family functioning, peer relations, physical health symptoms, and depression were measured with self-reported questionnaires. Data were analyzed with descriptive statistics, t-test, Pearson's correlations, and multiple regression. Results: Children's physical health symptoms and depression were not significantly different, and only their peer relations were significantly different according to their socioeconomic status ($t=-3.93$, $p<.001$). Depression showed significant positive correlation with physical health symptoms ($r=.720$, $p<.001$) and negative correlations with family functioning ($r=-.428$, $p<.001$) and peer relations ($r=-.775$, $p<.001$). The multiple regression model, which explained 73.5% of variance, showed peer relations ($r^2=.604$), physical health symptoms (r^2 change=.125), and family functioning (r^2 change=.005) as significant predictors for depression. Only the peer relations was significant predictor for their physical health symptoms and explained 50.6% of it. Conclusions: The peer relations was the most important factor in their physical and mental health at this age, and it can be affected by their socioeconomic status. Nursing interventions for promoting social relations and family functioning are required to improve children's physical and mental health, especially for vulnerable population.

Keywords : child, depression, health, peer relation

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