

The Lack of Trust and Knowledge about Government-Provided Assistance Programs by Korean-Americans with Disabilities

David Ahn

College of William & Mary, Virginia

Korean-American families with disabled family members often face difficulties in obtaining and utilizing government-provided aid. Due to negative societal views, language barriers, and lack of overall knowledge about the family member's disability and offered aid programs for such disabilities, many Korean-American families are not able to provide the most proper care for their family members. Many Korean-Americans, who are immigrants, express pressure and challenges in dealing with their families' disabilities. They also lack trust about patient information confidentiality, leading to many Korean-Americans hiding their family member's disability from medical professionals or government officials. To investigate this issue, an anonymous survey was distributed to Korean-American communities in California and Georgia. Evaluation of each family's knowledge of government-provided assist programs was assessed. Furthermore, Koreans' societal views on disabilities and level of education about various mental disabilities were explored. The survey investigates the causal relationship between the lack of efficient patient-care for these disabled members and the family's understanding of government-provided assistance programs, societal views on disabilities, and their backgrounds. One billion people, or 15% of the world's population, experience some form of disability, and disability prevalence is higher for developing countries. One-fifth of the estimated global total, or between 110 million and 190 million people, experience significant disabilities. Persons with disabilities are more likely to experience adverse socioeconomic outcomes such as less education, poorer health outcomes, lower levels of employment, and higher poverty rates. As COVID-19 continues to have wide-reaching impacts across the globe, it is important to note how persons with disabilities are uniquely impacted by the pandemic, including health, education, and transport considerations. In the area of health, many persons with disabilities have additional underlying health needs that make them particularly vulnerable to severe symptoms of COVID-19, if they contract it. Persons with disabilities may also be at increased risk of contracting COVID-19 because information about the disease, including the symptoms and prevention, are not provided in accessible formats such as print materials in Braille, sign language interpretation, captions, audio provision, and graphics. With widespread school closures, children with disabilities are lacking access to basic services like meal programs; assistive technologies; access to resource personnel; recreation programs; extracurricular activities; and water, sanitation, and hygiene programs. COVID-19 has led to a sudden shift in the role of the parent/caregiver to act simultaneously as their teachers, in addition to exacerbating the digital divide between

learners related to access to equipment, electricity, and the internet. As public transport systems reduce or stop services due to COVID-19, persons with disabilities who rely on these methods for accessible transport may not be able to travel, even for basic necessities or critical medical appointments. Barriers to full social and economic inclusion of persons with disabilities include inaccessible physical environments and transportation, the unavailability of assistive devices and technologies, non-adapted means of communication, gaps in service delivery, and discriminatory prejudice and stigma in society. Poverty may increase the risk of disability through malnutrition, inadequate access to education and health care, unsafe working conditions, a polluted environment, and lack of access to safe water and sanitation. Disability may also increase the risk of poverty, through lack of employment and education opportunities, lower wages, and increased cost of living with a disability. Global awareness of disability-inclusive development is increasing. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) promotes the full integration of persons with disabilities in societies. The CRPD specifically references the importance of international development in addressing the rights of persons with disabilities. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development clearly states that disability cannot be a reason or criteria for lack of access to development programming and the realization of human rights. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) framework includes seven targets, which explicitly refer to persons with disabilities, and six further targets on persons in vulnerable situations, which include persons with disabilities.