

# Midwest Longitudinal Study of Asian American Families

# MLSAAF Newsletter



THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO CROWN FAMILY SCHOOL OF SCOIL WORK, POLICY, AND PRACTICE

## Happy Thanksgiving from MLSAAF!

Dear MLSAAF Participants,

The MLSAAF research team would like to wish you a happy Thanksgiving holiday and take this moment to thank you and your family for your continued engagement with our study. Your support and contributions are invaluable to the work we do, providing insight and awareness to the experiences of Asian Americans. We cannot fully express our appreciation.

In this newsletter, you will find a number of sections related to our research work that we have been doing, introductions to our staff members, and several important findings related to mental health. We hope that the content of our newsletter can help provide you with more information about who we are and what we do.

Furthermore, our team is trying our best to secure additional funding to continue this longitudinal study on Asian Americans that can support the mental health and wellbeing of young Asian Americans. Thank you always for your continued interest and support for our study.

Lastly, if you have not claimed your gift-card we sent for the wave 4 study participation incentive, please do so sooner than later. Your reward is waiting to be retrieved! Hope you have a joyous holiday season and enjoy the newsletter!

Sincerely,  
MLSAAF  
Research Team



## Stay tuned for wave 4 findings!



Funded by the Russell Sage Foundation, we have finished collecting the wave 4 survey of MLSAAF. The “child” participants of the family are now all young adults! Our team is currently examining how racial experiences in 2021 have influenced the ways in which young Asian Americans have engaged in different types of civic actions – such as voting, volunteering and being involved in political activities. We are particularly interested in how young Asian Americans responded to COVID-19 racial discriminations. We aim to document the unique developmental pattern of racial/ethnic minority young adults. Stay tuned for our future research findings!

## Introducing our Staff!



### Meet Hillary Nicole Peregrina

Hillary (she/her/hers) is a graduate student at the University of Chicago's Crown Family School of Social Work, Policy, and Practice. She is pursuing a Master of Arts in Social Work with Clinical Concentration. She previously earned a Master of Arts in Asian American Studies from San Francisco State University. Prior to entering the field of Social Work, she taught Ethnic Studies courses at San Francisco State University and Pin@y Educational Partnerships. She plans to pursue a Ph.D. in Social Work to conduct clinical research on culturally responsive mental health interventions for Asian American immigrant families. She is also interested in conducting research on Asian American child and adolescent mental health, psychosocial development, civic engagement, and critical racial consciousness. In her free time, she enjoys Peloton workouts, walks in Downtown and Navy Pier, and exploring Chicago.



### Meet Eunseok Jeong

Eunseok (he/him/his) is a doctoral student research assistant who joined the MLSAAF team in the fall of 2019. He is currently a PhD student at the Crown Family School of Social Work, Policy, and Practice. His research focuses on social determinants of health disparities of racial/ethnic minorities and disparities in mental health service utilization among the racial, ethnic, and immigrant populations. He hopes to hear more from Asian Americans and provide various clinical and policy implications through the MLSAAF study.

## NIH features findings led by Michael Park

***Anticipation of racial bias protects Korean American youth from the harm of discrimination on mental health. Ethnic pride of Filipino American youth protects against discrimination's impact on mental distress. [\(click here for link\)](#)***

For Korean American youth: Parental advice to anticipate racial bias from the society mitigated the harmful effect of racial discrimination on mental health.

For U.S.-born Filipino Americans: Parent's teaching to take pride in their ethnicity and to be cautious in forming relationships with other groups was helpful to reduce the negative impact of racial discrimination on mental health.

For both Korean & Filipino Americans: Study participants reported experiencing more racial discrimination from 2014 to 2018. This increase has contributed to the increase in mental health problems among the participants.

## NIH featured findings (continued)

**The study provides insight into how coping strategies may help protect minority children against discrimination.**

### **Background:**

Hate crimes targeting Asian Americans grew by 30% from 2015 to 2018. Of this increase, 20% occurred from 2016 to 2017, more than for any other racial or ethnic group in the U.S. Among Asian Americans, experiencing discrimination has been linked to depression and related mental health effects. Minority parents often prepare their minority children to deal with discrimination - termed **Racial and Ethnic Socialization (RES), which has three major patterns.**

- 1) Preparation for bias:** *consists of parents informing their children that they may one day encounter racist behavior or experience racial discrimination.*
- 2) Promotion of mistrust:** *involves parents' emphasizing caution in forming relationships with other racial and ethnic groups.*
- 3) Ethnic heritage socialization:** *involves teaching ethnic cultural values, history, language, and pride in one's ethnicity.*

The study lead by Michael Park sought to determine whether these forms of RES among Korean Americans and Filipino Americans living in the Chicago area might influence their children's mental health. The team analyzed data from study of parents and children that began in 2014. The study enrolled 378 Filipino American youth and 408 Korean American. Each year until 2018 they responded to questions on their mental health status, experience with racial discrimination, and how their parents prepared them for racial bias.

### **Results:**

Overall, both groups reported an increase in discrimination and an increase in depressive symptoms and suicidal thoughts from 2014 to 2018. U.S.-born Filipino American youth reported higher rates of racial discrimination and lower rates of ethnic-heritage socialization than their foreign-born counterparts. In contrast, there was no difference in these two measures between U.S.-and foreign-born Korean American youth. Korean Americans reported an increase in parental promotion of mistrust. For both groups, preparation for bias decreased during the study period. However, throughout the study period, preparation for bias was higher than promotion of mistrust.

For Filipino Americans: Promotion of mistrust and ethnic-heritage socialization were protective against depressive symptoms for U.S.-born youth, but not for their foreign-born counterparts. For Korean Americans: a higher rate of ethnic heritage socialization was linked with lower levels of suicidal thinking and preparation for bias was linked with lower depressive symptoms, both foreign- and U.S- born Korean Americans.

# Contribution and the next steps

## **Significance:**

Park and his team suggested that U.S.-born Filipino American youth are more likely to see themselves as more strongly American and so may be more vulnerable to discrimination than are their foreign-born counterparts. For this reason, promotion of mistrust may have lessened discrimination's mental health effects. Yet, promotion of mistrust also has unhealthy effects because it may prevent children from forming beneficial relationships with teachers or peers. In contrast, preparation for bias, when it results in an open discussion of race and racism, may help children blunt racism's mental health impact. Similarly, ethnic heritage socialization may reduce the effect of discrimination, particularly for U.S.-born Filipino American youth, again, because they may be more vulnerable to discrimination than are their foreign-born counterparts.

## **Next Steps:**

Park and his team noted that their study did not distinguish between subtle and overt forms of discrimination and called for studies that might include a larger spectrum of discrimination measures to help parents cope with the types of discrimination their children may experience. The study population was from the Midwest and studies of Asian Americans in other parts of the United States might provide additional insights.

## **Reference:**

The study was conducted by Michael Park, Ph.D., an Assistant Professor at Rutgers University, and MLSAAF colleagues using the MLSAAF waves 1~3 datasets. The research findings appear in *Child Development*. Funding for wave 1~3 was provided by NIH's Eunice Kennedy Shriver and National Institute of Mental Health.

Park, M., Choi, Y., Yasui, M., Hedeker, D., & Specificity, Commonality, and Generalizability in Social-Emotional Development Special Section Editors. (2021). Racial discrimination and the moderating effects of racial and ethnic socialization on the mental health of Asian American youth. *Child Development*, 92(6), 2284-2298.