

*From the MLSAAF Team*

# HAPPY HOLIDAYS!

## *Letter from Dr. Choi*

Greetings, MLSAAF Participants and Families!



I am super excited to share the news that the National Institute of Mental Health (NIH/NIMH) will fund MLSAAF to continue and expand in the next five years! We are preparing the Wave 5 data collection and you will hear from us in the early Spring 2024 regarding the new data collection. With this new support, we plan to conduct three additional waves of surveys and expand to survey parents again. More details to come, but just briefly, we would also like to enhance how we assess stress levels by collecting biodata such as cortisol and inflammation levels and sleep quality. We may often not be aware of stress and mental distress, but the collection of biodata can enhance our ability to assess well-being.



The resumption of MLSAAF means that we will have rare longitudinal data of Asian Americans that spans from 12-17 years old in 2014 (Wave 1) to 25-30 years old in 2027 (Wave 7). The age range from 12 to 30 makes MLSAAF data truly one of a kind – the longest span of development – in addition to the rich set of Asian American family processes and innovative biodata.

We are extremely happy to resume the study and look forward to the journey together!

Very best,

Yoonsun Choi, PI and Professor at Crown Family School of Social Work, Policy and Practice  
University of Chicago

— Meet Our —  
**C U R R E N T S T A F F**



*Sinyeong Lee*

**Sinyeong Lee (she/her)** has recently joined as the Project Manager for the 5th wave. Originally from Korea, she moved to Chicago in 2021 to pursue a MA in Social Sciences at the University of Chicago. At MLSAAF, Sinyeong is committed to contributing her expertise and enthusiasm toward enhancing mental health outcomes for young Asian adults and understanding their unique challenges.



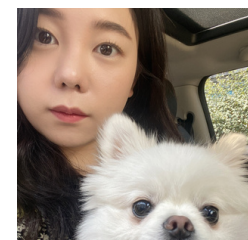
*Eunseok Jeong*

**Eunseok Jeong (he/him)** is a graduate research assistant who joined the MLSAAF team in the fall of 2019. He is currently a doctoral student at the Crown Family School. 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.



*Bryan Gu*

**Bryan Gu (he/him)** is a research assistant who joined the MLSAAF team in the fall of 2020. Through his work with MLSAAF, he hopes to better understand the various environmental and cultural factors which underlie mental health outcomes in Asian American young adults. Ultimately he seeks to work towards new interventions that can help to address issues of stigma and internalized trauma within the larger Asian American community.



*Ju Hye Jung*

**Ju Hye Jung (she/her)** is currently a graduate student at the University of Chicago's Crown Family School. Currently as a researcher, she explores diverse interests such as mental health, identity crises, family dynamics among Asian American adolescents, and potentially multicultural youths. Ju Hye aspires for this experience to become a platform for mutual learning, benefiting not only herself but also the entire team and beyond.



*Jessica Hong*

**Jessica Hong (she/her)** is a first year graduate student pursuing her MSW at University of Chicago. She previously worked as a Resident Director at a university and specifically worked to advocate for students of color and LGBTQIA+ students. Her desired area of study is learning about complex trauma and affordable holistic care, specifically within Asian populations and communities of color.

— *A Fun New Recipe to Try* —

## GOCHUJANG COOKIES

Have you tried Eric Kim's NY Times Gochujang Caramel Cookie Recipe?

It's easy and DELICIOUS. The perfect treat for this winter!

Check out the recipe [HERE!](#)



— *Park In Young's Research On* —

## MENTAL HEALTH PROBLEMS IN KOREAN AMERICAN FAMILIES

- Using MLSAAF survey data, we investigated how different family factors are related to youth's negative emotionality, and symptoms of depression of Korean American youth.
- The results showed that when youth reported being overly connected to their families (i.e., family enmeshment) and experiencing conflicts with their parents (i.e., intergenerational conflicts), they were more likely to report negative emotionality, which was also associated with an increase in depressive symptoms.
  - This suggests that focusing on reducing negative emotionality, improving the quality of parent-youth relationships, and establishing healthier family boundaries, could be beneficial in alleviating symptoms of depression in youth.
- By targeting these aspects, we may alleviate the immediate negative emotional experiences reported by youth and contribute to a long-term reduction in symptoms of depression. This offers valuable guidance for developing strategies and support systems aimed at enhancing the overall well-being of adolescents navigating the complexities of familial relationships.

Dr. In Young Park is a postdoctoral fellow researcher at Boston College School of Social Work. She is interested in understanding family processes and youth mental health distress outcomes within Asian immigration contexts and designing culturally tailored intervention programs for Asian immigrant families.