Adverse Childhood Experiences: Dr. SangNam Ahn, Principal Investigator

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In his recently published article, Dr. Ahn found that positive spousal support significantly weakened the deleterious effect of MCC on depression. Conversely, all negative social support from spouse, children, other family, and friends significantly strengthened the deleterious effect of MCC on depression. He believes that minimizing negative social support and maximizing positive spousal support can reduce depression caused by MCC and lead to successful aging among older adults.

After receiving the Memphis Research Consortium pilot grant, Dr. Ahn has investigated the roles of social support (e.g., neighborhood built environment [NBE], social capital index [SCI]) in the association between ACEs and childhood obesity. In his poster presented at the 2016 American Public Health Association (APHA) annual meeting, Dr. Ahn presented that there was a positive direct relationship between ACEs and body mass index (BMI), while there were negative direct relationships of BMI with NBE and SCI among representative U.S. children. Using latent variable mixture modeling, Dr. Ahn plans to present its related study findings at the 2017 APHA annual meeting where he will identify a number of latent classes to capture similarities in terms of SCI, NBE, and mental health problems; and to determine if classes varied in terms of the number of ACEs, and proportion of obesity among children.

As part of his MRC grant, Dr. Ahn conducted parental survey and key informant interviews in Memphis, TN, in 2016 to further identify the severity of ACEs and childhood obesity issues in Memphs. At the 2017 APHA annual meeting, he plans to present his study findings that approximately 22% of Memphis children were obese as compared to 14% of the national sample. More than 60% of Memphis children had at least one ACE compared to 50% of the national sample. Based on this pilot study, Dr. Ahn will further investigate the rural/urban disparities in ACEs and childhood obesity and the moderating roles of social support in ACEs and childhood obesity.