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Short Communication

Cultural diversity due to international marriage in South Korea

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ABSTRACT

Many muslim men from Islamic countries are marrying women in Korea. This has significant implications for health care providers in Korea. (Rawal Med J 2011;36:241-242)

Korea has 50 millions of population, and is vigorous country to reach the sixth place in the amount of trade.¹ According to the 2007 census, 29.2% of the population was Christian (18.3 % Protestants and 10.9% Catholic), 22.8% were Buddhist, and 46.5% were no religion.² Muslims were below just 0.1%. Large numbers of Korean are unfamiliar to Islamic culture, but the Korean society is becoming more internationalize and expanding over nation borders these days.

The registered population of foreigners is 918,917 (541,956 men and 403,961 women) in Korea by 2010 national statistics. The foreigners with entry permit for more than three months reaches 242,824 (127,464 men and 115,360 women) in 2009. The purpose of visit is various like education, industry, art, tourism, religion, etc. Many of them migrated to Korea for international marriage. The number of international husband and wife with Korean spouse is 7,961 and 26,274 of total marriage 326,104 in 2010.³ The nationality of men and women

for international marriage was listed in Table 1, Table 2 from 2006 to 2010. The total men for five years is up to 42,234. Pakistani and Bangladeshi are 607 and 254 people. The total of women is 137,824. Malaysia, Indonesia, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan belong to Organization of Islamic Conference.

Table 1. The nationality of men for international marriage from 2006 to 2010 in South Korea.

Nationality	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Total	9,094	8,980	8,041	8,158	7,961
Taiwan	90	111	109	94	94
Philippines	27	27	47	43	50
Vietnam	47	61	61	49	67
Nepal	19	28	43	43	16
Pakistan*	150	134	117	104	102
India	30	21	41	38	32
Sri Lanka	21	30	18	24	36
Bangladesh*	54	45	46	63	46
China	2,589	2,486	2,101	2,617	2,293
Japan	3,412	3,349	2,743	2,422	2,090
France	98	112	91	99	116
Italy	24	36	27	29	38
Germany	126	98	115	110	135
Netherland	12	19	12	20	18
U.K.	136	125	144	166	178
Switzerland	28	21	25	36	27
Canada	307	374	371	332	403
U.S.A.	1,443	1,334	1,347	1,312	1,516
Australia	137	158	164	159	194
New Zealand	50	63	74	56	79
Others	294	348	345	342	431

*Organization of Islamic Conference

I met one Uzbekistan pregnant for performing an epidural procedure to reduce labor pain. She was embarrassed to position for epidural and had got something that made her stand out from other Korean women. I found that she was so uncomfortable and awkward to receive medical service from me. The colleague says we have a lot more chances to meet female

patients from other cultural area than before.

Table 2. The nationality of women for international marriage from 2006 to 2010 in South Korea.

Nationality	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Total	29,665	28,580	28,163	25,142	26,274
Taiwan	104	129	152	134	152
Philippines	1,117	1,497	1,857	1,643	1,906
Vietnam	10,128	6,610	8,282	7,249	9,623
Cambodia	394	1,804	659	851	1,205
Laos	5	11	16	20	44
Malaysia*	11	16	23	28	13
Indonesia*	97	74	77	81	82
Thailand	271	524	633	496	438
Nepal	33	82	159	316	202
Mongolia	594	745	521	386	326
China	14,566	14,484	13,203	11,364	9,623
Japan	1,045	1,206	1,162	1,140	1,193
Kazakhstan*	26	25	21	18	25
Uzbekistan*	314	351	492	365	317
Canada	91	134	117	134	144
U.S.A.	331	376	344	416	428
Australia	45	63	61	65	74
New Zealand	9	15	20	20	25
Kyrgyzstan*	80	62	49	54	116
Russia	203	152	110	139	119
Others	201	220	205	223	219

*Organization of Islamic Conference

According to 2007 U.S. Census Bureau, there is one international migrant every 27 seconds in U.S.A.⁴ The ethnic and cultural composition of population is also becoming more diverse in Korea. Cultural diversity must be considered by nurse and clinician.⁵ Languages, perception of health, sickness, recovery and death need to be included in a broad sense.⁶

Korea was known as the “Hermit Kingdom” in the past, but is changing to blast furnace of diverse cultural immigrants in the twenty-first century. Health care providers ought to make careful preparations for various cultural patients.

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