



A Fact-Finding Analysis on the Convenience Store Use of Korean University Students in their 20s and Health Variables

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Dear Editor-in-Chief

In a survey on the status of the Korean convenience industry in 2019, the number of convenience stores in Korea surpassed 42,000 at the end of 2019. There was one convenience store per 1,350 population, which was far greater compared to one convenience store per 2,250 population in Japan (1). As such, the Korean convenience store market is continuously growing, known to be derived from consumption behavior pursuing substance, simplicity, convenience, increase in one-person households, and consumption culture change, including a small amount purchase pattern (2).

Convenience stores fall in line with the consumption pattern of those in their 20s, seeking convenient dietary options due to such merits as convenient accessibility and 24-hour operations. Also, having a meal in a convenience store is gradually on the rise.

The dietary lifestyles of people in their 20s feature irregular mealtime and inappropriate healthcare, although individual interest in health is apparently huge. In fact, the ratio of those who think that their dietary life value is merely eating or meeting hunger is rising (3).

In a situation where the patronization frequency in convenience stores among Korean people in their 20s (those who exhibit many dietary lifestyle problems) increases, a probability to negatively affect

dietary life and healthcare according to the use of convenience stores is high, and social attention promoting concern about such a situation is growing.

This study, a fact-finding analysis on the convenience store use of Korean university students in their 20s, along with the accompanying health variables, aimed to present a sound direction on convenience store use and consumption and provide baseline data for public health study that is necessary for healthy dietary life management.

This study targeted 199 students among Namseoul University located in Cheonan City, Chungcheong Province, students in their 20s in Korea with the WMA Declaration of Helsinki, using convenience stores once or more. The weekly mean use frequency of convenience stores, status of using convenience meals, distance between convenience store and residence, and effects on distance, upon using convenience stores, and on dietary habit, gaining weight, drinking, and late night meal (snack) according to the use of convenience stores were surveyed. Also, a questionnaire survey on the status of checking nutritional contents and calories upon purchasing foods was carried out. A frequency analysis on the measured questionnaire survey details was conducted by means of SPSS 23.0 Windows (IBM Corp., Armonk, NY, USA),



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and the sampling error was $\pm 1.09\%$ at 95% confidence level.

According to the study results, the mean use frequency of convenience stores was 1-2 times a week (51.7%), 3-4 times (31.5%), 5-6 times (7.9%), and 7 times (8.9%). In the question on whether they use convenience stores often, 40.4% of the participants said "Yes," 30.0% said "Moderate," and 29.6% said "No." On the distance between convenience stores and residence, 20.1% of the total participants said within 100m, 37.2% said 100m-500m, 31.6% said 500m-1000m, and 11.1% said over 1km. In the question on whether distance affects the use of convenience stores, 58.1%, 24.1%, and 17.7% said "Yes," "Moderate," and "No," respectively.

In the question on whether convenience store use affects dietary life, 68.5%, 23.2%, and 8.3% said "Yes," "Moderate," and "No," respectively. In the question on whether convenience store use affects gaining weight, 36.5% responded "Yes," 30.9% responded "Moderate," and 33.5% responded "No." In the question on whether convenience store use affects drinking, 25.7% said "Yes," 22.7% said "Moderate," and 51.7% said "No." In the question on whether convenience store use affects late night meal (snack), 43.9%, 25.6%, and 30.5% said "Yes," "Moderate," and "No," each.

Lastly, in the question on whether the participants checked nutritional contents upon purchasing foods sold at convenience stores, 14.8%, 20.2%, and 65.1% said "Yes," "Moderate," and "No." In the question on whether the participants checked calories upon purchasing foods at convenience stores, 21.8% said "Yes," 23.8% said "Moderate," and 54.4% said "No."

This study examined the situations of convenience store use among Korean university students in their 20s, along with their health variables. They were affected by distance in using convenience stores, and their dietary habit and late night meal (snack) were affected by the use of convenience stores. In addition, the participants did not check nutritional contents and calories upon purchasing foods at convenience stores.

The study results can provide new vision and information to a public health study necessary to establish consumption culture, considering health variables upon convenience store use, as well as to a study on the situation of convenience store use of university students (in their 20s) in many countries, including Korea.

Conflict of interest

The author declares that there is no conflict of interests.

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