Pre- and Postintervention Differences in Acculturation, Knowledge, Beliefs, and Stages of Readiness for Mammograms Among Korean American Women

Jin Hee Kim, PhD, RN, and Usha Menon, PhD, RN

The number of Americans with Korean ancestry in the United States is about 1.3 million, representing 0.4% of the total U.S. population. Of that population, 75% are foreign-born, 58% are women, and 42% are women aged 35 years or older (U.S. Census Bureau, 2006). Breast cancer is the most frequently diagnosed cancer among Korean American women (McCracken et al., 2007), and those diagnosed present with larger tumor size and more advanced-stage breast cancer than Caucasian women (89% versus 70%) (Hedeen, White, & Taylor, 1999), implying that Korean American women adhere less to recommended breast cancer screening guidelines. Korean American women also have higher breast cancer incidence rates than women in their native country (16.9 versus 10.9 per 100,000) (Gomez et al., 2003); however, reasons for this are unknown. Some evidence suggests that breast cancer risk among Asian women increases after at least 10 years of living in the United States (Deapen, Liu, Perkins, Bernstein, & Ross, 2002; Ziegler et al., 1993), but solid evidence related to risk factors, such as Western diet, genetics, or environment, has yet to be discerned. Because early detection through routine screening contributes to a decrease in breast cancer mortality, the particularly low rates of adherence to recommended breast cancer screening guidelines among Korean American women are disconcerting.

Reports on mammography screening use among Korean American women suggest that more than 50% have had a mammogram at some point in their lifetime but that recommended mammography screening guidelines have not been followed: 33%–39% had a mammogram in the past year, 53%–59% had mammograms within the preceding two years, and 78% had at least one mammogram in their lifetime (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [CDC], 2004; Juon, Kim, Shankar, & Han, 2004; Kandula, Wen, Jacobs, & Lauderdale, 2006; Lee, Fogg, & Sadler, 2006; Jacobs, & Lauderdale, 2006; Lee, Fogg, & Sadler, 2006; Juon, Kim, Shankar, & Han, 2004; Kandula, Wen, Jacobs, & Lauderdale, 2006; Lee, Fogg, & Sadler, 2006; Gomez et al., 2003). Of those diagnosed, 33%–39% had a mammogram within the preceding two years, and 53%–59% had a mammogram in the past year, 53%–59% had mammograms within the preceding two years, and 78% had at least one mammogram in their lifetime. For permission to reproduce multiple copies, e-mail pubpermissions@ons.org.