

# Material Hardship and Depression among Low-Income Families in Korea

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Experiencing material hardship increases the risk of depression. However, there have been no studies examining the association between material hardship and depression in Korea. Using data from the nationally representative Korean Welfare Panel Study (KWPS) from 2006 to 2007, we examined the relationship between material hardship and depression among the 2913 selected sample. We found that the level of material hardship was positively associated with depression, confirming that this significant relationship was robust across our additional models (e.g., lagged-dependent variable model and pooled-sample fixed-effect model). Among the five individual indicators of material hardship, unable to “pay bills,” “afford heat in winter,” and “receive medical services” were significantly related to depression. Moreover, we found that relationship between material hardship and depression tended to be concentrated on single and elderly headed households. We suggest that securing material resources should be the one of the main priorities to address depression in low-income families.