



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Contact: Jordan Nussear, SNEB
Phone: (317) 328 – 4627
Email: jnussear@sneb.org

**Seung-Yeon Lee, PhD to Receive the 2021 Korean Society of
Community Nutrition – SNEB Professional Achievement Award**

INDIANAPOLIS, IN (August 1, 2021) – The Society for Nutrition Education and Behavior (SNEB) has partnered with the Korean Society of Community Nutrition (KSCN) to present Seung-Yeon Lee, PhD with the KSCN-SNEB Professional Achievement Award during the 2021 SNEB Annual Conference presented virtually on August 8-10.

Seung-Yeon Lee is an Associate Professor at the Department of Rehabilitation, Exercise, and Nutrition Sciences at the University of Cincinnati (UC). Dr. Lee's research focus areas include health disparity, food insecurity, and food literacy in low-income populations, including underserved African/Black Americans.

Dr. Lee and her research team had established solid partnerships with local food pantries and conducted needs assessments using mixed methods. One study showed the limited availabilities of nutrition education and healthy food options at local food pantries and multiple challenges to improve food options and provide nutrition education. In addition, high prevalence of diabetes and hypertension in food pantry clients was identified as a common concern of food pantry coordinators. Dr. Lee made efforts to address the concern of high prevalence of diabetes in food insecure populations in two ways: developing a group diabetes self-management program and creating "The Most Diabetes and Health Friendly Food Pantry Shelves initiative" which was well received by food pantry clients.

For the recent several years, she has been focused on food literacy in low-income populations. Even though food literacy is essential to achieve optimal nutrition and health, there has been no valid and reliable tools to assess food literacy in low-income adults. She and her research team developed a food literacy assessment tool and tested validity and reliability. Dr. Lee plans to use the tool to obtain baseline data of food literacy to develop effective nutrition education programs targeting low-income adults, particularly African /Black Americans.

Currently Dr. Lee has been working on several research projects with multiple interdisciplinary research teams to address health disparities. NIH/NIGMS R25-funded We Engage for Health program uses comic style story-based interventions to reduce health disparities in the underserved community, mainly composed of African/Black Americans. She has contributed to developing nutrition related stories. Dr. Lee and her research teams also partner with Black Churches in Cincinnati to increase fruit and vegetable consumption using the Body and Soul and Cooking Up Health integrated program and to improve food literacy in African/Black women breast cancer survivors using a comic style story-based intervention to prevent breast cancer recurrence. Finally, she is a part of an interdisciplinary research team developing a prototype drone for telehealth. She hopes to use the drone to assess home food environment and provide nutrition education to the underserved populations who do not have easy access nutrition education in the future.

Besides these research projects, Dr. Lee has devoted herself to address health disparities in underserved populations through her two service-learning courses, such as Community Nutrition and Nutrition Education for Behavior Change, prior to the COVID-19 pandemic. For the service-learning projects, students developed nutrition education classes targeting food pantry clients, mainly African/Black Americans, and implemented them at local food pantries. Further, Dr. Lee is a faculty advisor for a student organization, UC Nutri-Ed, which has provided regular nutrition education classes to low-income adults partnering with St. Vincent de Paul since 2015.

When asked about the similarities or differences between the health challenges in the United States and Korea Dr. Lee commented, “The high prevalence of chronic diseases, such as hypertension, type 2 diabetes, stroke, and heart diseases, from poor nutrition and lack of physical activity is a common challenge in both countries. Unlike the United States, South Korea is a culturally homogenous country so cultural diversity is not a major factor to be considered when addressing nutrition and health issues. However, the number of foreign residents/citizens and multicultural families have increased in recent decades. Hence, I believe that more attention to the importance of cultural diversity in nutrition and health may be necessary in South Korea.”

Dr. Lee has attended several joint meetings with KSCN members during SNEB conferences for the last several years. In July 2019, she was invited by a couple of KSCN members and their colleagues to present her research. She gave seminars on the perception and acceptability of “The Most Diabetes and Health Friendly Food Pantry Shelves initiative” at Kongju National University and Sungshin Women’s University. In January 2019, Dr. Lee was invited to join the editorial board of the *Journal of Nutrition and Health* which is affiliated to the Korean Society of Community Nutrition and the Korean Nutrition Society.

Established in 2016, the KSCN-SNEB Professional Achievement Award receives nominations which are evaluated by both organizations and awarded to an outstanding professional who has made notable contributions in the field of international nutrition education for various populations, including immigrant and minority populations.

ABOUT THE SOCIETY FOR NUTRITION EDUCATION AND BEHAVIOR

The Society for Nutrition Education and Behavior advances food and nutrition education research, practice, and policy that promote equity and support public and planetary health. To learn more, visit www.sneb.org.

ABOUT THE KOREAN SOCIETY OF COMMUNITY NUTRITION

The Korean Society of Community Nutrition was founded in 1995 to enhance nutritional status and promote health status of community members, nutritionally vulnerable population, workers, and all people through community nutrition research and public health nutrition practices