



## **An Analysis of the Relationship Between Body Composition and Watching Korea's One Person Muk-Bang (Binge Eating Show) on the Internet**

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**(Received 18 Jul 2020; accepted 25 Jul 2020)**

### **Dear Editor-in-Chief**

A new genre centered on Korea has recently emerged, forming a new video content trend worldwide. It is a novel genre called Muk-bang (binge eating show), which is highly popular among the public and cannot be viewed in the existing broadcasting field. Muk-bang is a short term in Korean for broadcasting eating. It is a newly coined word and refers to a video content program chiefly featuring eating various foods.

The reason why people pay attention to the food-related content is that one-person household is increasing, resulting to growing loneliness (1). Due to a trend of well-being and lookism, people who are on a diet relieve stress and escape from social pressures through proxy binge eating (2).

Harsh expressions are frequently used in Muk-bang, a form of private broadcasting, due to a host's psychological closeness with the viewers (3). Muk-bang is rated sadistic because it features excessive food consumption. It emerges as a serious social issue among young Korean people, and a general view is that watching it can negatively affect viewers' health.

The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between body composition, which can be health-related physiological variables, and viewing Muk-bang for more than 6 months. This

study can offer proactive information to the research on public health related to watching Muk-bang since it is difficult to find specific previous studies that analyzed the characteristics of health variables in relation to it.

This study targeted 140 adults in their 20s in Cheonan City, South Korea in 2020, divided into a group that watched Muk-bang once or more in a week for 6 months and a group that never watched it for 6 months. The subjects did not have any experience in participating in regular exercise programs and dietary programs 6 months before the study started. A questionnaire survey was carried out on the mean number of days of watching Muk-bang programs per week and watching duration per viewing for the group watching the Muk-bang programs. As health-related psychological variables, the Body Mass Index (BMI), body fat percentage, and abdominal fat percentage were measured by means of In-Body 720 (Biospace, Korea) through BIA mode. For the measured data, a frequency analysis of the questions and an independent *t*-test for group comparison were conducted via SPSS 23.0 (IBM Corp., Armonk, NY, USA) Windows. The significance level was set to 5%.



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According to the study result, the Muk-bang watching group's mean number of days watching Muk-bang for a week was 1-2 days (36.4%), 3-4 days (14.3%), 5-6 days (5.7%), and a whole week (6.4%). The mean watching duration per viewing was less than 30 min (34.3%), 30 min-1 hr (17.1%), 1 hr-2 hrs (10.75%), and more than 2 h (0.7%). Upon comparison of body composition between the viewing group and non-viewing group, significant differences were not found between them in terms of BMI ( $t=.303$ ), body fat percentage ( $t=-.698$ ), and abdominal fat percentage ( $t=-1.234$ ).

No differences in body composition according to the status of watching Muk-bang were found. However, a further study considering the viewing type of the Muk-bang is necessary. The results of this study are evaluated as research data helpful to studying the relationship between watching Muk-bang on the Internet and health-related physiological variables.

## Conflict of interest

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.

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