

Extended Abstract

As for all life stages, planning is vital for optimal adaptation. Older adults who discuss and plan for their end-of-life have better outcomes, including a higher quality of life and death (Yamaguchi et al., 2017). Despite this, discussing death is unfortunately still considered taboo among many older adults in Korea (Han, 2016; Park et al., 2022). Given the large portion of older adults in Korea who feel uncomfortable talking about death, we have a limited understanding of if and how individuals plan for their end-of-life.

This study focuses on the planning of funeral arrangements prior to death. Unlike Western culture, where adults often make arrangements for themselves, in Korea, societal norms dictate that funeral arrangements are made by adult children. This is especially true among older generations. According to the Korean traditional value of familism, individuals continue their lives through their offspring and lineage following their physical death. Thus, death is perceived as a familial, not an individual event. Families, primarily adult children, are obligated to make funeral arrangements, which are viewed as a series of rituals linking life and death. Families play a crucial role in the final stages of life, as indicated by a national survey, which showed that two-thirds of the respondents reported that a good death is characterized by the presence of family and not being a burden to the family (Yun et al., 2017). The fear of being a burden and becoming dependent on the family is a major fear in late life (Alfaro et al., 2021; Fox, 2020), and such fears persist up until death for Korean older adults.

Under Confucianism, it is a child's duty to respect and provide care and support to their parents (Park, 2017; Sung, 1990). Specifically, there are three main conditions of filial piety: 1) respecting parents, 2) bringing no dishonor to parents, and 3) taking good care of parents (Li Chi, 1879, as cited in Sung, 1990). In other words, care is a key aspect of filial piety, and this extends after the parents' passing. In accordance with Korean filial norms,

adult children who provide more care to their older parents are likely to provide support throughout their older parents' lives (Chappell & Funk, 2012). While parents are living, emotional, instrumental, and financial support occurs simultaneously with their adult children. As parents approach the end-of-life, their daily care needs increase, such as managing health issues and performing house chores. The intergenerational support exchange between adult children and their parents may exhibit different patterns depending on the context. For example, the child-parent exchange of support can differ among two- and single-parent families. In Korea, older parents depend heavily on adult children for financial and care support (Floridi, 2020), and this dependency increases when one parent is absent. It's also important to note the influence of relationship quality (Chen et al., 2015; Fingerman et al., 2011).

The experience of receiving or providing care can be different. Older adults who receive care from their adult children may view themselves as dependent, which may cause a change in their attitudes regarding death. Similarly, caring for a spouse may also prompt thoughts on their own end-of-life, particularly among those who view the care as burdensome (Park et al., 2022). This aligns with the significant fear of becoming a burden to one's family in later life (Yun et al., 2017). Moreover, death may become more tangible to those experiencing less controllable, acute health conditions. More concrete thinking on death and dying may lead to action (i.e., making funeral arrangements).

This study used data from the 2020 National Survey of Older Koreans, conducted by the Korea Institute for Health and Social Affairs since 2008. Based on the 2018 Population and Housing Census, participants were selected using stratified, multi-stage cluster sampling. Community-dwelling adults aged 65 and older were interviewed in person from 17 municipalities across Korea (Kim et al., 2022). Respondents were asked whether or not they had prepared or were planning the following: (a) prepared hemp funeral garb or funeral

portrait, (b) cemetery arrangements (e.g., green space, columbarium, graveyard), (c) consulted/signed up for funeral services, and (d) discussed funeral wishes with family. The responses were dichotomous on each of these items (1 = yes, 0 = no).

We measured three types of support: (a) emotional, (b) instrumental, and (c) financial. Responses were coded yes if individuals answered somewhat agree or strongly agree for each type of support from either their spouse or adult children. Specifically, emotional and instrumental supports were measured by the provision and receipt from spouses and children, respectively. The provision and receipt of financial support from spouses were not measured, as spouses share financial resources as a household. Thus, there were nine support items in total (i.e., emotional and instrumental support provided and received from spouses, emotional and instrumental support provided and received from children, and financial support received from children). In addition, four sets of covariates were selected based on their potential effects on the pattern of funeral arrangement planning: (a) sociodemographic (i.e., gender, age, education), (b) economic, (c) health (i.e., institutional activities of daily living, chronic disease), and (d) family (i.e., relationship quality between spouses, as well as between parents and their adult children) characteristics.

For the data analysis, we first provided the descriptive statistics of the study variables by marital status. Namely, the main interest of the current study, funeral arrangements, and sociodemographic, economic, health, and family characteristics were presented to understand the characteristics of the sample. Next, logistic regression models were conducted using STATA 17 to examine the factors associated with funeral arrangements among married and unmarried older adults. As part of a sensitivity analysis, we further categorized the unmarried group into widowed and divorced and conducted logistic regression models to investigate if the results were consistent.

The findings suggest that unmarried older adults are more likely to take charge of planning funerals, possibly as a result of their experiences with losing a spouse. On the other hand, adult children often take on the responsibility of arranging funerals for their parents, driven by a sense of duty and respect for their elders. Unmarried older adults also tend to receive greater emotional, practical, and financial support from their children compared to their married counterparts. The involvement of adult children in funeral arrangements highlights the importance of traditional family values, with children assuming the role of primary caregivers. Close family ties established through these arrangements can bolster support systems for older adults. Overall, the study indicates that better preparation for end-of-life matters can alleviate anxiety for both older adults and their families, underscoring the significance of intergenerational support in funeral planning among Korean older adults.