



SOCIOECOLOGICAL DETERMINANTS OF SUGAR-SWEETENED BEVERAGE CONSUMPTION IN SOUTH KOREAN ADOLESCENTS: A REVIEW

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KEYWORDS :

To synthesize recent empirical research on intrapersonal, interpersonal, and environmental (socioecological) factors associated with SSB consumption in South Korean adolescents, drawing on four key studies.

(SSB) consumption among adolescents is a growing public health concern, associated with obesity, metabolic risk, poor oral health, and negative mental health outcomes. In South Korea, high prevalence of SSB use demands understanding of multifactorial determinants – not just individual behaviors, but also peer influence, school contexts, and broader lifestyle factors.

Key Studies Reviewed

1. Ra & Kim (2025) — Socioecological Factors
 - Cross-sectional study of 231 high school students (aged 15–18) using the socioecological model.
 - Intrapersonal: Higher habit strength for SSBs and fast-food consumption were positively associated; longer sleep duration was negatively associated.
 - Interpersonal: Perceived peer SSB consumption was strongly correlated.
2. Han et al. (2023) — Behavioral & psychosocial path analysis
 - Using data from the 2022 Korea Youth Risk Behavior Survey (KYRBS, ~49,500 adolescents), path modelling identified key influences.
 - Fast-food intake had the strongest direct effect; late-night snacking and leisure sedentary behavior (smartphone, “mukbang” watching) also mediated effects.
 - Self-perceived poor health was inversely associated with SSB consumption, mediated via diet and screen behaviors.
3. Kim & Lee (2024) — Health behaviours and perceived health status
 - Analysis of 2019 KYRBS data (57,302 adolescents) studied association between water/SSB intake, health behavior, and self-rated health.
 - Adolescents with high SSB frequency but inadequate water intake reported more unhealthy behaviors (e.g., less physical activity) and worse self-perceived health.
 - Implication: Encouraging adequate water consumption could be an upstream strategy to displace SSB use.

Synthesis & Discussion: Across these studies, several consistent socioecological drivers of SSB consumption emerge:

- Intrapersonal behaviors: Habit strength, fast-food intake, and sleep duration are key. Adolescents with stronger habitual SSB consumption and fast-food patterns tend to consume more, while longer sleep seems protective. (Ra & Kim; Han et al.)
- Peer influence: Perception of peer SSB consumption strongly correlates with personal use. This underscores normative pressures and the need for peer-based interventions. (Ra & Kim)
- Environmental availability: School vending machines and nearby stores make SSBs easily accessible, suggesting

environmental modification is a powerful lever. (Ra & Kim)

- Lifestyle clustering: SSB use does not occur in isolation — it coexists with heavy screen time, late-night eating, and poor sleep, cumulatively boosting obesity risk. (Han et al.; Lee et al.)
- Health perception: Adolescents who report poor health are paradoxically more likely to consume SSBs; encouraging healthier hydration (more water) might reshape both health behaviors and perceptions. (Kim & Lee)

REFERENCES

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