


2020 May Educational Issues in Korea

Depression in Youth : based on Korean Youth Health risk behavior Survey



DEPRESSION IS AS COMMON AS THE COLD!
TO WHAT EXTENT WOULD ADOLESCENTS IN KOREA FEEL DEPRESSED?

Depression in adolescents

from
the health behavior investigation
of adolescents

KEDI
KOREAN EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT INSTITUTE

Depression in Youth : based on Korean Youth Health risk behavior Survey

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Depression is called a ‘cold of the heart’ that anyone can experience. If so, how depressed are teenagers in Korea today? This article tries to investigate the level of Depression, stress, and suicide attempt through the Youth Health risk Behavior Survey conducted by the Ministry of Health and Welfare. The subject of this survey is secondary school students who were randomly selected.

Survey title : Youth Health risk Behavior Survey

Type of survey(1) : General Statistical Survey

Type of survey(2) : Continuous survey

Legal basis : National Health Promotion Act. Article 19.

Survey Objectives : Collecting basic data for planning and evaluating youth health promotion policy and youth health-related indicators for international comparison. Providing basic research data in related fields through understanding the current status of health behaviors of Korean teenagers (middle and high school students).

Survey period : 1 year

Data collecting process : Sample schools → Ministry of Health and Welfare(Center of disease control)
– Venue: School Computer room
– Sponsored by the Ministry of Education and the district office of education.

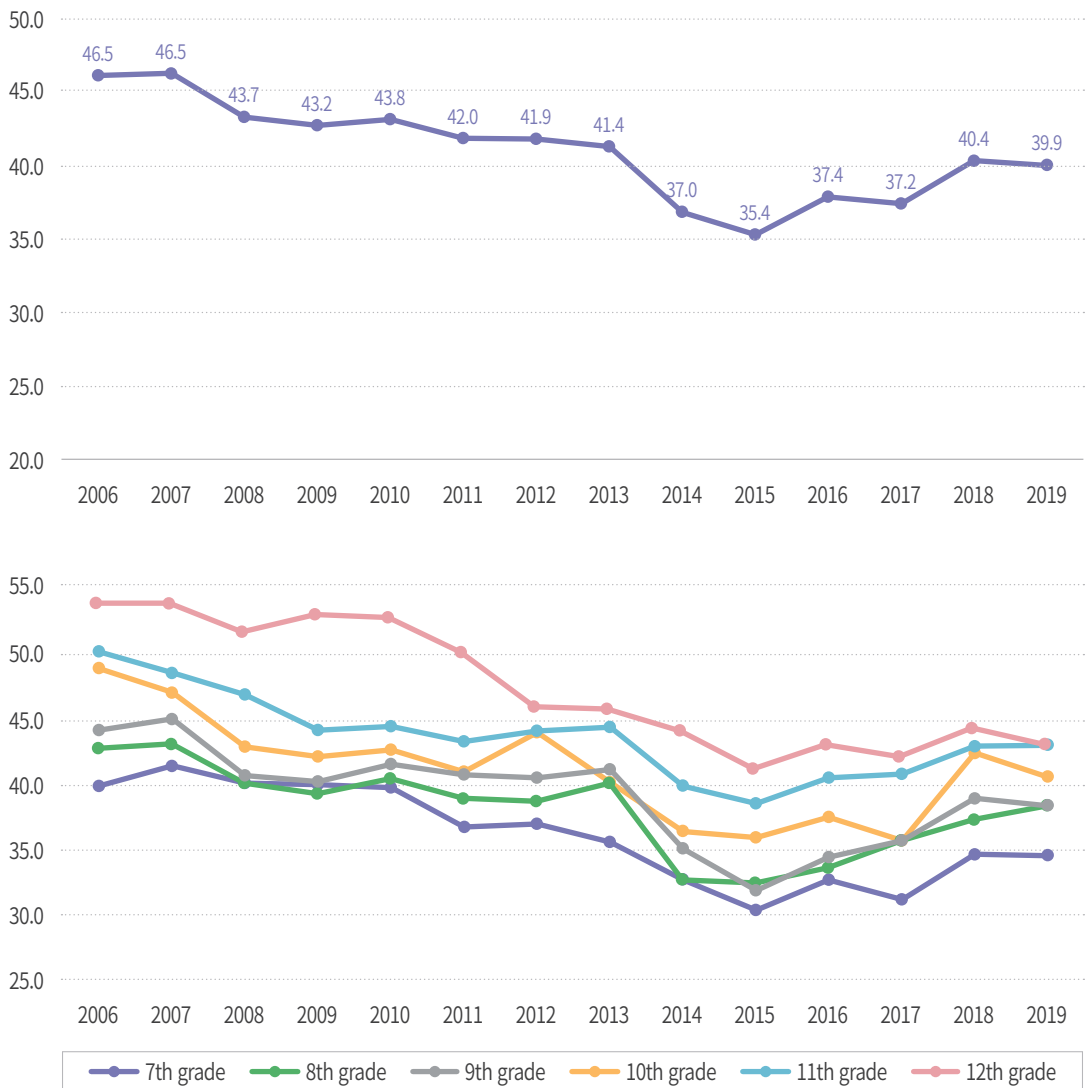
Data unit : Province/region(cities)

Data time series : 2005~2019(by year)

First of all, the survey focuses on how much teenagers are stressed. The stress recognition rate of secondary school students was 46.5% in 2016 and 39.9% in 2019. It has been on the decline since 2006 but has been on the rise again since 2016. Compared to the National Health Statistics result which covers adults’ data, the stress recognition rate of adults over the age of 19 is late 20%, while that of teenagers ranges from 35% to 46%.

By age, the higher the grade, the higher the stress recognition rate there is. The rate of 7th-grade students is the lowest, while that of high school seniors(12th-grade) is the highest. Since 2006, high school seniors have had the highest rate of stress recognition. In 2019, the rate of 11th-grade students increased, showing 43.2 % which is about the same as that of high school seniors.

[Figure 1] Stress recognition rate of Youth(2006~2019)



[Table 1] Stress recognition rate of Youth(2005~2019)

Year	Stree recognition Rate	By age(grade in school)					
		7th grade	8th grade	9th grade	10th grade	11th grade	12th grade
2005	45.6	41.3	43.3	45.3	49.7	49.6	-
2006	46.5	39.9	42.9	44.4	49.2	50.4	54.3
2007	46.5	41.7	43.2	45.1	47.2	48.9	54.2
2008	43.7	40.5	40.3	41.0	43.1	47.0	52.0
2009	43.2	40.1	39.4	40.5	42.3	44.4	53.4

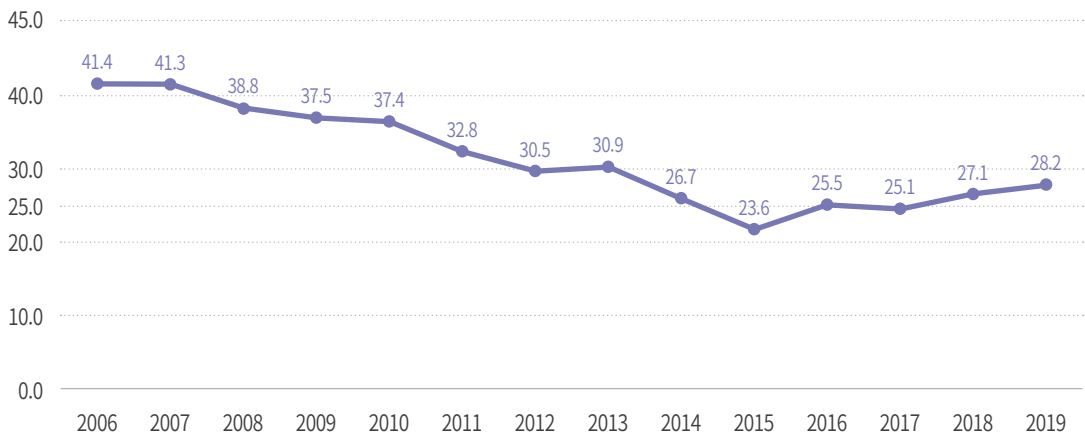
Year	Stree recognition Rate	By age(grade in school)					
		7th grade	8th grade	9th grade	10th grade	11th grade	12th grade
2010	43.8	39.9	40.7	41.7	42.8	44.8	53.2
2011	42.0	36.9	39.2	40.8	41.1	43.5	50.5
2012	41.9	37.0	38.8	40.7	43.7	44.2	46.3
2013	41.4	35.7	40.3	41.2	40.3	44.7	46.1
2014	37.0	32.3	32.7	35.1	36.5	39.9	44.5
2015	35.4	30.3	32.5	31.9	36.0	38.7	41.4
2016	37.4	32.6	33.7	34.3	37.5	40.7	43.3
2017	37.2	30.9	35.5	35.6	35.8	40.9	42.2
2018	40.4	34.7	37.3	38.9	42.4	43.1	44.5
2019	39.9	34.5	38.7	38.4	40.8	43.2	43.2

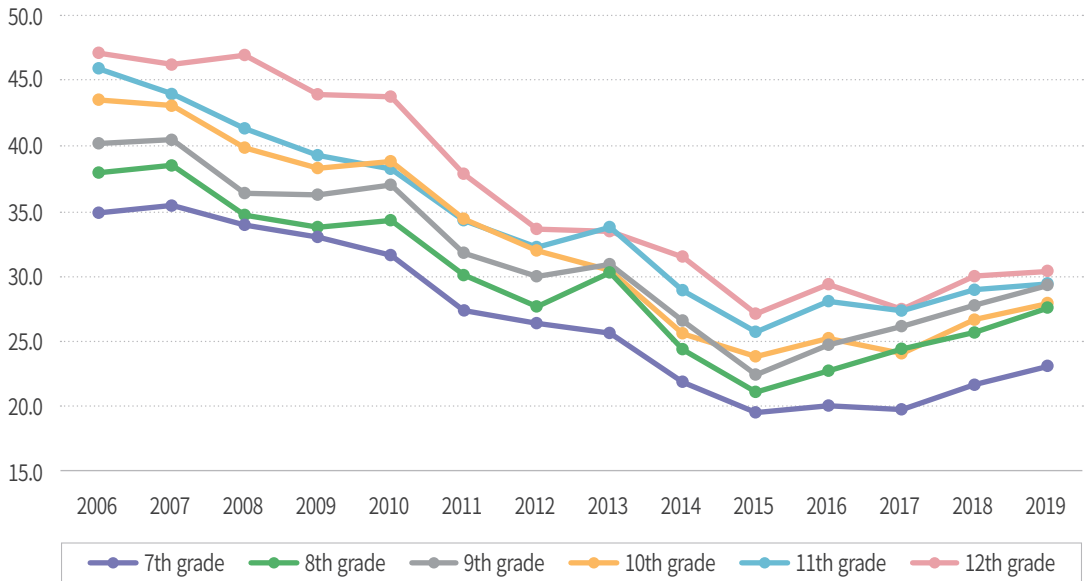
Note : Stress recognition rate : Percentage of youth who report that feel stressed 'much' or 'too much'.
Source : kosis.kr

Next, in terms of depression, the proportion of secondary school students who reported that felt depressed in 12 months is 41.4% in 2006 and 28.2% in 2019. This rate of depression had been on the decline since 2006 but has been on the rise again since 2016 as well as the stress recognition rate.

The higher the grade, the higher the rate of depression. The depression rate of 7th-grade students is the lowest, while that of 12th-grade students is the highest. There were significant differences between the 7th- and 12th-grade students' results in 2006, but not in 2019.

[Figure 2] Depression rate of Youth(2006~2019)





[Table 2] Depression rate of Youth(2005~2019)

Year	Depression rate	By age(grade in school)					
		7th grade	8th grade	9th grade	10th grade	11th grade	12th grade
2005	29.9	27.0	27.8	30.3	32.4	32.8	-
2006	41.4	35.1	38.1	40.3	43.5	45.9	47.3
2007	41.3	35.5	38.5	40.7	43.2	44.1	46.7
2008	38.8	34.2	35.0	36.5	39.9	41.5	47.3
2009	37.5	33.2	33.9	36.3	38.3	39.3	44.3
2010	37.4	31.9	34.2	37.0	38.7	38.4	44.0
2011	32.8	27.7	30.2	32.0	34.4	34.2	38.0
2012	30.5	26.6	27.7	30.2	31.9	32.2	33.8
2013	30.9	25.8	30.3	30.9	30.4	33.7	33.8
2014	26.7	22.2	24.4	26.6	25.7	28.9	31.7
2015	23.6	19.8	21.0	22.6	23.8	25.7	27.3
2016	25.5	20.2	22.7	25.0	25.3	28.2	29.7
2017	25.1	19.9	24.4	26.1	24.0	27.3	27.7
2018	27.1	21.8	25.7	27.8	26.6	28.9	30.3
2019	28.2	23.3	27.7	29.5	28.0	29.4	30.6

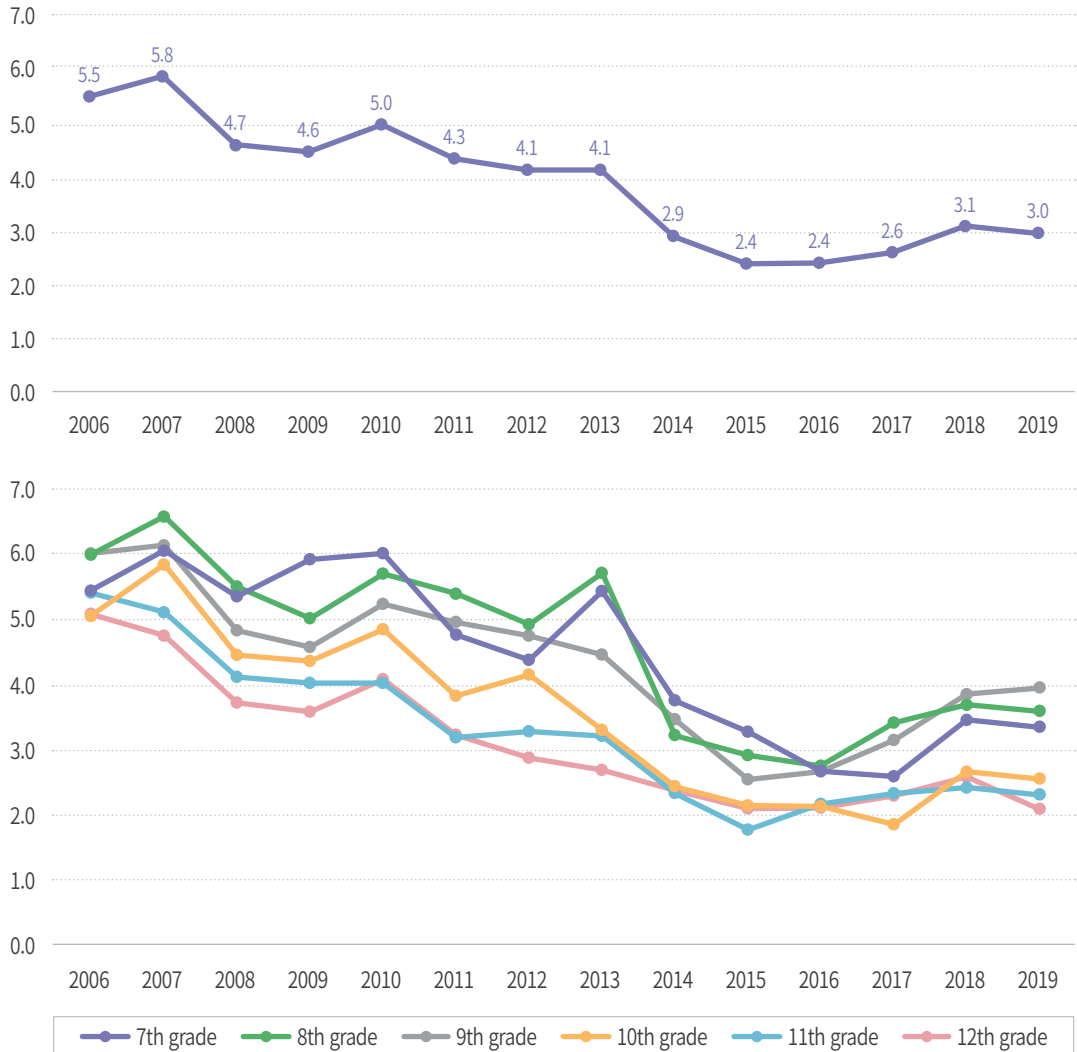
Note : Depression rate : Percentage of youth who reported that felt sadness or hopelessness in the 12 months prior to the survey.

Source : kosis.kr

Lastly, the suicide attempt rate of teenagers in secondary school students was 5.5% in 2006 and 3.0% in 2019. As well as stress recognition and depression, the suicide attempt rate has been on the decline since 2006 but has been increasing slightly since 2016.

By age, suicide attempt rates follow a different pattern from the other two indicators. The 7th-grade students showed the highest level of suicide attempt rate while the 12th-grade students showed the lowest. It is worth noting that the lower secondary school students' suicide attempt rate is consistently higher than that of upper secondary school students since the Survey began.

[Figure 3] Suicide attempt rate of youth(2006~2019)



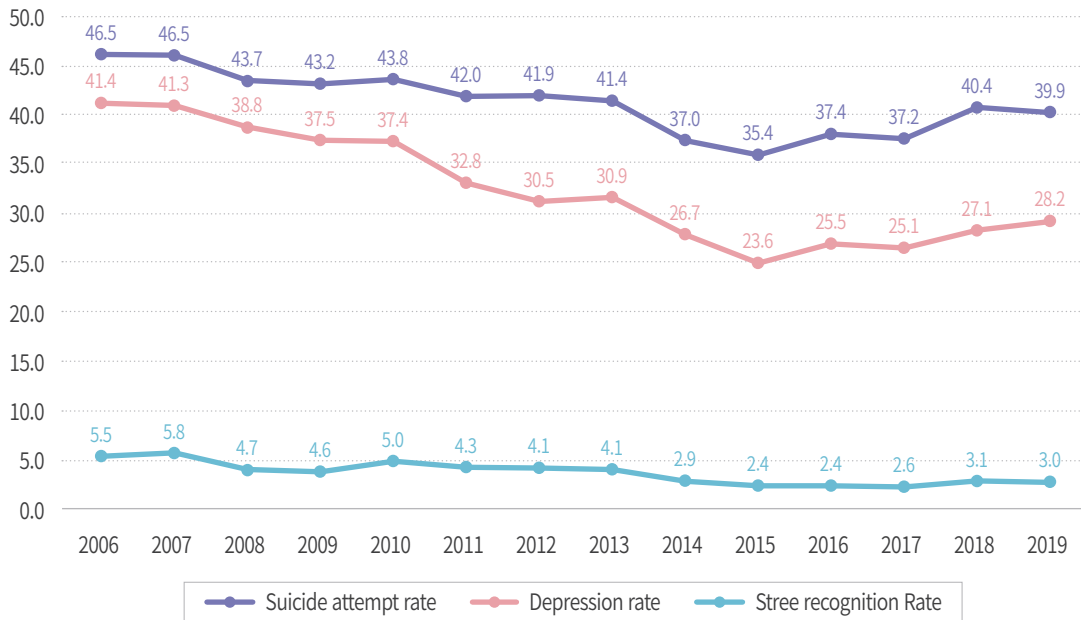
[Table 3] Suicide attempt rate of youth(2005~2019)

Year	Suicide attempt rate	By age(grade in school)					
		7th grade	8th grade	9th grade	10th grade	11th grade	12th grade
2005	4.7	4.6	5.2	5.0	4.6	4.1	-
2006	5.5	5.4	6.0	6.0	5.1	5.5	5.1
2007	5.8	6.0	6.6	6.1	5.9	5.2	4.8
2008	4.7	5.3	5.5	4.8	4.5	4.2	3.8
2009	4.6	5.9	5.0	4.5	4.4	4.1	3.6
2010	5.0	6.0	5.7	5.2	4.9	4.1	4.1
2011	4.3	4.7	5.4	4.9	3.9	3.3	3.3
2012	4.1	4.3	4.9	4.7	4.2	3.4	2.9
2013	4.1	5.4	5.7	4.4	3.4	3.3	2.7
2014	2.9	3.7	3.2	3.4	2.5	2.4	2.4
2015	2.4	3.2	2.9	2.5	2.2	1.9	2.1
2016	2.4	2.6	2.7	2.6	2.2	2.2	2.1
2017	2.6	2.5	3.4	3.1	1.9	2.4	2.3
2018	3.1	3.4	3.7	3.8	2.7	2.5	2.6
2019	3.0	3.3	3.6	3.9	2.6	2.4	2.1

Note : Suicide attempt rate : Percentage of youth who reported that attempted suicide in the 12 months prior to the survey.
Source : kosis.kr

All three rates of indicators above decreased in 2019 compared to 2006 as seen in figure 4. In particular, the depression rate showed the largest drop, by 13.2%p from 2006.

[Figure 4] Stress, Depression and suicide attempt of youth(2006~2019)



On March 15, 2019, the Korean government announced the 1st joint Basic Plan for the improvement of Student Health(2019~2023) at the Social Relations Ministers’ Meeting (hosted by Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Education Yoo Eun-Hye). This plan aims to enhance the field-based supports to ensure the students’ health under the vision of “All Students Healthier” (Ministry of Education Press release, March 15, 2019). To achieve this goal, continuing attention will be required at the government, schools, and households level.

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