Statement of Research Interests and Motivation

My research spans later life, from labor supply and health insurance coverage at retirement age to long-term care and, most recently, end-of-life care. I am a third-year PhD student in Public Administration at Syracuse University, specializing in the economics of aging, and I am building a research agenda that follows older adults across the full arc of later life.

My earlier work examined how Social Security and minimum wage policy affect employment and health insurance coverage among adults approaching retirement, motivated partly by my background at the National Pension Service in South Korea, an institution similar to the Social Security Administration in the U.S. As a research assistant at Syracuse, I then worked on nursing home experiences and family caregiving behavior during COVID-19, which drew my attention to the economics of long-term care. That work grew into a first-authored paper I have presented at two conferences and am preparing to submit for publication. Working closely on caregiving and institutional care naturally led me to the very end of life, a stage that receives far less policy and research attention than earlier ones, even though what happens there has profound consequences for patients, families, and public programs. Addressing that gap motivates my current research.

I am currently developing a dissertation chapter, supported by a 2026 Syracuse University Research Excellence Dissertation Grant, studying how two Medicare hospice payment reforms, the 2014 IMPACT Act and the 2016 two-tier payment reform, affected hospice access, care transitions, and family caregiving among terminally ill older adults. Both reforms were designed to reduce potentially inappropriate long-stay enrollment, but they also created financial incentives for providers to limit enrollment of patients with genuinely long illness trajectories. More than half of Medicare beneficiaries enroll in hospice before death, and because hospice enrollment removes professional care infrastructure, shifts in enrollment directly affect the care burden borne by families, who provide the majority of caregiving hours near the end of life. I use Medicare claims and HRS-Medicare linked data to study these outcomes.

I am seeking mentorship in a few areas. While my institution has scholars in health economics and aging, end-of-life economics is not an area of active research here, and I am developing this agenda with limited mentorship in this specific area. I would benefit from guidance on how to position this work and where the most important open questions in this area are, as well as feedback on my research design from senior scholars working on Medicare and long-term care. I am also still securing funding and access for additional Medicare data files beyond what is currently available to me, and advice on how researchers have navigated this practically would be valuable.

The NBER Mentoring Program would be especially valuable for me at this stage. NBER is home to many of the leading researchers on Medicare, aging, and long-term care, and I am unlikely to get this kind of concentrated access to that community from within my institution. Beyond the immediate feedback on my work, I hope to build scholarly connections in this area that will support my research both now and into my career. I am just beginning this research direction and I think both the structured feedback and the broader connections this program offers would significantly shape my development as a researcher.

Soohyun Kim

Ph.D. Student, Public Administration
Aging Studies Institute, Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs
Syracuse University
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Education

Ph.D. in Public Administration 2023 – Present
Syracuse University, Syracuse, NY
Academic Advisor: Emily Wiemers, Ph.D.

Completed courses: Health Economics, Applied Econometrics for Policy Analysis, Health Economics and Policy, Changing American Health Care System, Public Expenditure, Public Budgeting, Social Welfare Policy, Tax Policy, Sociology of Health and Illness, Quantitative Methods 2, Quantitative Methods 1, Economics of Public Decisions, Foundations of Policy Analysis and Management, Intellectual History of Public Administration, Public Organizations and Management

M.A. in Social Welfare 2017 – 2020
Seoul National University, Seoul, South Korea
Academic Advisor: Baeg Eui Hong, Ph.D.
Thesis: *The Effect of Raising National Pension Eligibility Age on Later-life Employment in South Korea*

B.A. in Child Welfare (Major), Adolescent Science (Minor) 2007 – 2012
Chung-Ang University, Seoul, South Korea

Research Interests

Economics of Aging, End-of-Life Care, Long-Term Care, Caregiving, Health Economics

Publication

Ku, I., **Kim, S.**, & Yoon, H. (2024). Small cash transfers to older people: do they reduce poverty? *Ageing & Society*, 1–19.

Working in Progress

Kim, S. Do Minimum Wage Increases Affect Employment and Health Insurance Coverage for Older Adults?

Kim, S., Truskinovsky, Y., & Wiemers, E. Older Adults' Expectations of Living in Nursing Home Declined during the Pandemic

Presentations and Forums

June 2026 Poster. *Older Adults' Expectations of Living in a Nursing Home Declined during the Pandemic.* American Society of Health Economists. Minneapolis, MN

May 2026 Paper Presentation. *Older Adults' Expectations of Living in a Nursing Home Declined during the Pandemic.* Population Association of America, St.Louis, Missouri

November 2025 Paper Presentation. *Do Minimum Wage Increases Impact Employment and Health Insurance Coverage for Older Adults?* Association for Public Policy Analysis & Management, Seattle, WA

November 2025 Paper Presentation. *Do Minimum Wage Increases Impact Employment and Health Insurance Coverage for Older Adults?* National Tax Association, Boston, MA
November 2025 Poster. *Older Adults' Expectations of Living in a Nursing Home Declined during the Pandemic.* Gerontological Society of America, Boston, MA
April 2025 Poster. *Do Minimum Wage Increases Impact Employment and Health Insurance Coverage for Older Adults?* Population Association of America, Washington, DC
October 2021 Speaker. *An Evaluation of the Jae-In Moon Administration's Pension Reform Efforts.* Panel discussion for the 20th presidential election hosted by the South Korean Public & Social Services and Transportation Workers Union in Seoul, South Korea
October 2019 Panel. *A Discussion Forum to Establish a Gender Approach in Social Security.* Co-hosted by a member of the National Assembly, Public Pension for All, and the South Korea Women's Associations United in Seoul, South Korea

Research Experience

Research Assistant January 2024 – Present
Syracuse University
Principal Investigator: Yulya Truskinovsky, Ph.D.
Project: *The Effects of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Long-Term Care for High-Need Older Adults with and Without Alzheimer's Disease and Related Dementias*

Co-Researcher February 2020 – July 2024
Seoul National University
Principal Investigator: Inhoe Ku, Ph.D.
Project: *Small Cash Transfers to Older People: Do They Reduce Poverty?*

Research Assistant July 2022 – November 2022
Gyeonggi Research Institute, Suwon, South Korea
Department of Economic and Social Policy
Principal Investigator: Yun-young Kim, Ph.D.
Project: *Analysis of the Effect of the South Korean Basic Pension on the Labor Supply of the Elderly*

Research Assistant May 2021 – July 2021
Gyeonggi Research Institute, Suwon, South Korea
Department of Economic and Social Policy
Principal Investigator: Yun-young Kim, Ph.D.
Project: *A Study on Impact of the Pension Credits on the Youth's Pension Eligibility*

Research Assistant May 2017 – November 2017
Busan Presbyterian University
Principal Investigator: Seoksoon Shim, Ph.D.
Project: *A Survey on the Welfare Needs of Older Adults with Disabilities and Their Family Caregivers and Future Direction of Policies: Focusing on Developmental and Cerebral Palsy Disabilities*

Work Experience

Full-Time Union Activist July 2021 – March 2022, July 2019 – December 2020
National Pension Branch of Korean Public & Social Services and Transportation Workers Union
Jeonju, South Korea

Assistant Manager January 2013 – June 2023
National Pension Service
Jeonju, South Korea

Non-Peer Reviewed Publications

Kim, Y., Park, J., & **Kim, S.** (2022). *Analysis of the Effect of the South Korean Basic Pension on the Labor Supply of the Elderly.* Suwon: Gyeonggi Research Institute (Korean)

Kim, Y., Park, J., & **Kim, S.** (2021). *A Study on Impact of the Pension Credits on the Youth's Pension Eligibility.* Suwon: Gyeonggi Research Institute (Korean)

Min, G., **Kim, S.**, Lee, J., & Oh, J. (2021). *A Study on the Role Enhancement of the National Pension Service.* Jeonju: National Pension Branch of South Korean Public & Social Services and Transportation Workers Union (Korean)

Oh, G., Kim, S., **Kim, S.**, Nam, J., Oh, S., & Lee, D. (2019). *A Diagnostic Study on the South Korean Pension System and Old-Age Income Security by Income Level: Focusing on the Role Enhancement of Basic Pension and the Establishment of the Multi-Pillar Pension System.* Seoul: My Welfare (Korean)

Shim, S., Chang, H., Cwon, O., & **Kim, S.** (2018). *A Survey on the Welfare Needs of Older Adults with Disabilities and Their Family Caregivers and Future Direction of Policies: Focusing on Developmental and Cerebral Palsy Disabilities.* Seoul: The South Korean Parents Society for the Disabled & Seoul: Community Chest of South Korea (Korean)

Honors and Awards

2026	2026 Syracuse University Research Excellence Dissertation Grant ($3,000)
2025	2025 APPAM Registration Grant ($130)
2010, 2011	Merit-based Scholarship, Chung-Ang University ($2,000 total, approx.)

Professional Licensure

National Certificate of 1st Grade Social Worker (Ministry of Health and Welfare of Korea)

Affiliations

American Society of Health Economists (2026-Present)
Population Association of America (2026–Present)
Association for Public Policy Analysis & Management (2025–Present)
National Tax Association (2025–Present)
Gerontological Society of America (2025–Present)