

INFANTS' SLEEP HABITS DURING THE 1ST YEAR OF LIFE: AN INTERNATIONAL MULTICENTRIC STUDY

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Background: Sudden unexpected infant death represents the main cause of death within the 1st year of life in industrialized countries, excluding the perinatal period. Although a certain cause has not yet been identified, several risk factors seem to take part in the tragic event. For this reason, dealing with the conditions of risk and widely disseminating the recommendations developed during the years is of primary importance.

Objectives: Our Centre has joined a multicentric study together with University of Mie (Japan) and University Hospital Reine Fabiola of Brussels (Belgium) in order to analyse infants' sleep habits in different socio-cultural contexts better to address the recommendations to the parents and improve prevention.

Methods: Administration of an anonymous questionnaire to the parents of infants who turned for ultrasound screening of congenital hip dysplasia at the Regina Margherita Children's Hospital in Turin and to parents of children under 12 months who presented to our Centre for an episode of Apparent Life-Threatening Event.

Results: 75 questionnaires were collected over the course of one year (July 2018-july 2019).

The sample under examination had a mean age of 3.17 months +- 1.422. 57.3% of the babies are first-born children. More than 70% among the parents interviewed were married couples of Italian nationality and had a high cultural level (diploma or graduation).

Regarding sleep position, 79.4% of the babies slept supine and the remaining 20.6% slept in lateral or prone position. Almost 70% of the children slept in a child-sized bed, the remaining 30% in an adult bed.

In all ages, more than 30% of the babies slept in the same bed together as their parents, with the highest percentage among children aged 2-6 months. In the lower category of age (0-2 months), as many children slept with the parents as those who slept in a bedside cradle (32% each).

Furthermore, 56% of the babies were breastfed; about 30% of the infants never used a pacifier while just over 20% used it during sleep. Approximately 66% of the children had the habit of used to finger sucking.

60% of the interviewed parents did not smoke.

Among the infants who came to visit at SIDS Centre, more than 80% slept supine already before or on the same visit; the remaining 20% went from a lateral or prone position to a supine one after the visit. 27% of the babies slept in the same bed as their parents: of these, only one case maintained this habit, while the others switched to the bedside cradle for co-sleeping after the visit.

Among those not visited, 87% already slept in supine position and maintained the trend in later ages. Instead, almost 35% of the infants slept in the same bed as their parents, and only 12% changed this habit.

Conclusions: in the interviewed sample, a good application of the recommendations for SIDS prevention was found as regards the supine position, the child-sized bed and breastfeeding.

The percentage of children under 6 months who slept in the same bed with their parents remains high, particularly in the category aged 2-6 months, namely the time lapse that includes the age at highest risk of SIDS.

The SIDS Centre visit seemed to be effective in spreading the rules for safe sleep, especially those about bedsharing.