

Background

- Over 75% of breastfeeding mothers bedshare with their babies at least part of the night.
- Exclusively breastfed babies have the lowest rates of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS), sudden unexpected deaths in infancy (SUDI), and all-cause infant mortality in the United States and worldwide.

Objectives

- Describe unintended consequences of safe sleep messages that may result in increased risk to infants.
- Describe flaws and limitations in research studies that are used as the basis of safe sleep policies.
- Describe conflicts of interest related to SIDS, safe sleep and infant mortality groups.



Kate with Ziven, 8 weeks

Methods

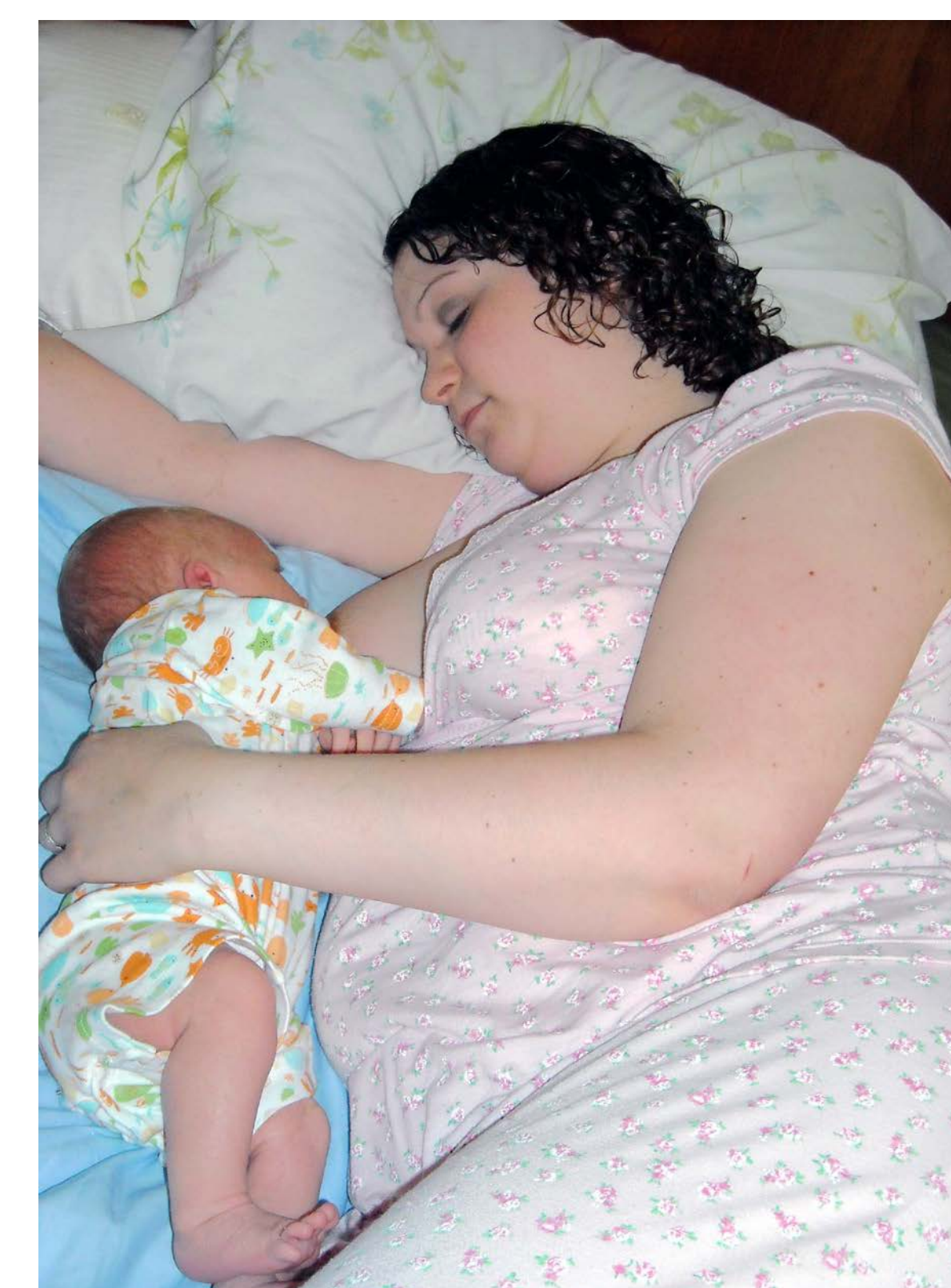
- Literature search using PubMed and Google Scholar for the terms “SIDS,” “sudden infant death syndrome,” “bedsharing,” “co-sleeping,” “breastfeeding,” “unintended consequences” and “sleep-related deaths.”
- Monitoring of internet, social media sites and parenting publications from January 2003 through October 2013.
- Examination of SIDS-support, crib distribution, and safe sleep internet sites; national, state and local SIDS and safe sleep initiatives; published policies and position statements of international, national, and state professional associations and public health agencies relevant to maternal-child health.

Results

- Bedsharing and breastfeeding are closely linked. “Longer duration of bedsharing, indicated by a larger cumulative bedsharing score, was associated with a longer duration of any breastfeeding.”¹
- Mothers use multiple arrangements and strategies to manage sleep and continue breastfeeding.²
- SIDS and smothering are two different entities, but are used interchangeably in some research studies. For example: “Given the risk of sudden infant death syndrome related to bedsharing, multipronged strategies to promote breastfeeding should be developed and tested.”¹
- SIDS is not related to bedsharing: the most central risk factors for SIDS are maternal smoking during pregnancy³, prone position⁴, formula feeding⁵, and non-proximity to a responsible caretaker during sleep⁶.
- Infant smothering deaths are most commonly associated with couches, alcohol or drug use in the bedpartner, or sleeping with non-parents.
- Statements that suggest that “bedsharing is lethal” may be dismissed or ignored by minorities⁷ and nursing mothers. When an adult bed is thought to be dangerous, mothers tend to use unplanned surfaces, especially sofas which pose a greater risk for smothering.^{8,9,10}
- Inconsistent, missing and confusing definitions were found. For example: “Bed sharing was defined as a shared sleep surface consisting of either a bed or sofa.”¹¹
- Studies failed to include independent documented variables including Infant feeding method which was inconsistently reported; alcohol use in bed partners which was missing or extrapolated¹²; and smoking during pregnancy or in the household which was not consistently reported.
- Evidence of formula-industry funding was found on some SIDS-reduction groups web sites (First Candle and CJ SIDS foundation), and SIDS researchers’ publications:
 - Moon, R. Y., Oden, R. P., & Grady, K. C. (2004). Back to Sleep: an educational intervention with women, infants, and children program clients. *Pediatrics*, 113(3 Pt 1), 542-547. **This work was supported by a grant from the Gerber Foundation**
 - Moon, R. Y., Sprague, B. M., & Patel, K. M. (2005). Stable Prevalence but Changing Risk Factors for Sudden Infant Death Syndrome in Child Care Settings in 2001. *Pediatrics*, 116(4), 972-977. **This study was funded by a grant from the Gerber Foundation**
 - Moon, R. Y., Tanabe, K. O., Yang, D. C., Young, H. A., & Hauck, F. R. (2012). Pacifier use and SIDS: evidence for a consistently reduced risk. *Maternal Child Health Journal*, 16(3), 609-614. doi: 10.1007/s10995-011-0793-x **This study was supported by HRSA grant 1R40MC08963-01 and by funding from First Candle.** First Candle Partners: The 2007 Albertsons Campaign: A Partnership Between Albertsons, Gerber Products Company, Johnson & Johnson, Procter & Gamble and Ross Products Division; Gerber Products Company; HALO Innovations, Inc.; Juvenile Products Manufacturers Association, Inc.; Simmons; KidsToy Industry Association, Inc. Retrieved on 9/19/2012 from www.firstcandle.org/about/partners/private-partners/general-contributions/



Jane with Edwin, 4 months



Sue with Joey, 3 months

Discussion & Recommendations

- Responsible parents are caught between two public health agendas: Safeguarding (prevention of harm) vs. Well-being (promotion of health including breastfeeding).
- Breastfeeding initiatives mostly lack “safe bedsharing” guidelines.
- Infant-mortality and SIDS-reduction initiatives fail to name formula as a SIDS risk factor. California Department of Public Health’s policy could be used as a national model.
- There is an urgent need for AAP and other public health associations and agencies to develop safe bedsharing guidelines that acknowledge different risk factors for breastfeeding, non-smoking, sober mothers, and communicate these widely.
- Stakeholders must work together and acknowledge parent’s rights to full information on safety that supports their individual family needs.
- Safe bedsharing, increasing breastfeeding, and reducing SIDS and SUDI are compatible goals.¹³

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