

Differences in Infant and Parent Behaviors during Routine Bed Sharing Compared with Cot Sleeping in the Home Setting.

Baddock SA, Galland BC, Bolton DP, Williams SM, Taylor BJ.
Pediatrics. 2006 May;117(5):1599-1607.

OBJECTIVES. To observe the behavior of infants sleeping in the natural physical environment of home, comparing the 2 different sleep practices of bed sharing and cot sleeping quantifying to factors that have been identified as potential risks or benefits.

METHODS. Forty routine bed-sharing infants, aged 5-27 weeks were matched for age and season of study with 40 routine cot-sleeping infants. Overnight video and physiologic data of bed-share infants and cot-sleep infants were recorded in the infants' own homes. Sleep time, sleep position, movements, feeding, blanket height, parental checks, and time out of the bed or cot were logged.

RESULTS. The total sleep time was similar in both groups (bed-sharing median: 8.6 hours; cot-sleeping median: 8.2 hours). Bed-sharing infants spent most time in the side position (median: 5.7 hours, 66% of sleep time) and most commonly woke at the end of sleep in this position, whereas cot-sleeping infants most commonly slept supine (median: 7.5 hours, 100%) and woke at the end of sleep in the supine position. Prone sleep was uncommon in both groups. Head covering above the eyes occurred in 22 bed-sharing infants and 1 cot-sleeping infant. Five of these bed-sharing infants were head covered at final waking time, but the cot-sleeping infant was not. Bed-sharing parents looked at or touched their infant more often (median: 11 vs 4 times per night) but did not always fully wake to do so. Movement episodes were shorter in the bed-sharing group as was total movement time (37 vs 50 minutes respectively), whereas feeding was 3.7 times more frequent in the bed-sharing group than the cot-sleeping group.

CONCLUSIONS. Bed-share infants without known risk factors for sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS) experience increased maternal touching and looking, increased breastfeeding, and faster and more frequent maternal responses. This high level of interaction is unlikely to occur if maternal arousal is impaired, for example, by alcohol or overtiredness. Increased head covering and side sleep position occur during bed-sharing, but whether these factors increase the risk of SIDS, as they do in cot sleeping, requires further investigation.

For Full-text: <http://www.pediatrics.org>