

Survey of sleeping position recommendations for prematurely born infants on neonatal intensive care unit discharge.

Rao H, May C, Hannam S, Rafferty GF, Greenough A.

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Introduction: Prematurely born infants are at an increased risk of sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS), particularly when sleeping prone. Parents are strongly influenced in their choice of sleeping position for their infant by practitioners. The aim of this study was to determine the neonatal units' recommendations regarding the sleeping position for premature infants prior to and after discharge and ascertain whether there had been changes from those recorded in a survey performed in 2001-2002.

Materials And Methods: A questionnaire survey was sent to all 229 neonatal units in the United Kingdom; 80% responded.

Results And Discussion: The majority (83%) of units utilized the supine sleep position for infants at least 1-2 weeks prior to discharge, but after discharge, only 38% of the units actively discouraged prone sleeping and 17% additionally recommended side sleeping. Compared to the previous survey, significantly more units started infants with supine sleeping 1-2 weeks prior to discharge ($p < 0.0001$) and fewer recommended side sleeping after discharge ($p = 0.0015$). However, disappointingly, less actively discouraged prone sleeping after discharge ($p = 0.0001$).

Conclusion: Recommendations regarding sleeping position for prematurely born infants after neonatal discharge by some practitioners remain inappropriate. Evidence-based guidelines are required as these would hopefully inform all neonatal units' recommendations.

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