

Health departments do it better: prenatal care site and prone infant sleep position

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Objectives: Reduction of prone infant sleep position has been the main public health effort to reduce the incidence of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS).

Methods: Oregon Pregnancy Risk Assessment Monitoring System (PRAMS) surveys a stratified random sample of women after a live birth. In 1998-1999, 1867 women completed the survey (64.0% unweighted response; 73.5% weighted response).

Results: Overall, 9.2% of all women "usually" chose prone infant sleep position, while 24.2% chose side and 66.5% chose supine position. Women receiving care from private physicians or HMOs more often chose prone position (10.6%) than women receiving prenatal care from health department clinics (2.5%), hospital clinics (6.1%) or other sites (8.3%). Compared to health department prenatal clinic patients, private prenatal patients were more likely to choose prone infant sleep position, adjusted odds ratio = 4.78 (95% confidence interval [CI] 1.64-13.92).

Conclusions: Health Department clinics have done a better job than private physicians in educating mothers about putting infants to sleep on their backs. Providers-especially private providers-should continue to stress the importance of supine sleep position for infants.

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