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# Implementation of the AAP Recommendations to Reduce SIDS Risk in NICUs: A Collaborative Study of Nursing Knowledge and Practice

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# Implementation of the AAP Recommendations to Reduce SIDS Risk in NICUs: A Collaborative Study of Nursing Knowledge and Practice



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## Introduction

There is a direct relationship between non-supine sleeping and Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS). Premature infants are at increased risk for SIDS and often cared for in non-supine positions during the course of hospitalization. According to the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), healthy premature infants ought to be placed supine for sleep before discharge from the neonatal intensive care unit (NICU), and parents should receive specific instructions about infant sleep position and other risk factors for SIDS.

## Purpose

To examine and describe NICU nurses':

- ❖ Knowledge of SIDS risk reduction measures
- ❖ Modeling of safe infant sleep interventions prior to hospital discharge
- ❖ Inclusion of SIDS risk reduction in parent education

## Design and Methods

- ❖ 14-item questionnaire
- ❖ 1080 surveys distributed to RNs in 19 Level II and III NICUs in New Jersey and Pennsylvania
- ❖ 430 responses

## Results

### Nursing Knowledge:

- ❖ 85% identified the AAP SIDS reduction strategies for safe sleep
- ❖ RN age, experience and education had no influence on supine positioning

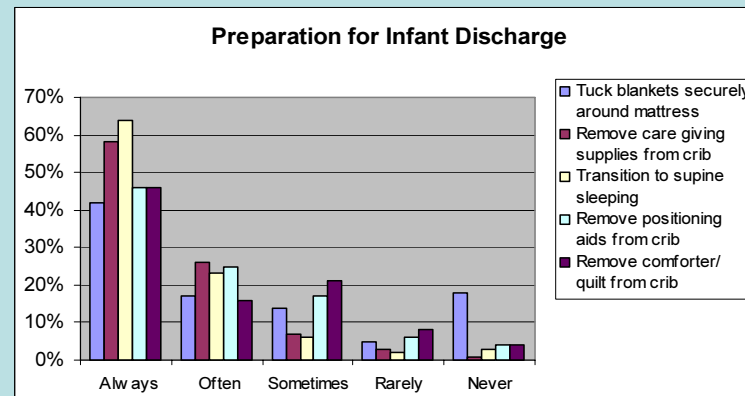
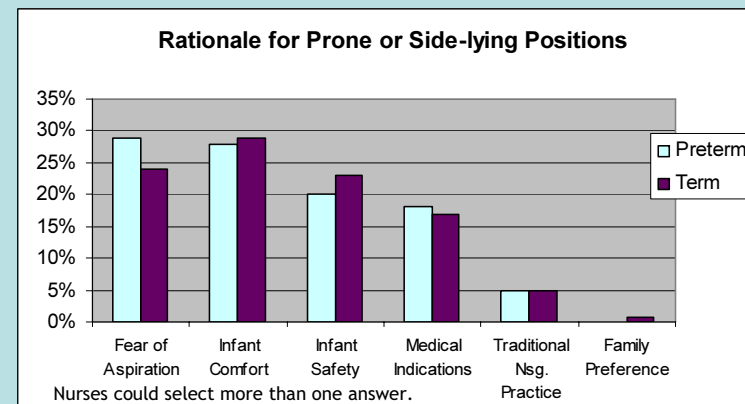
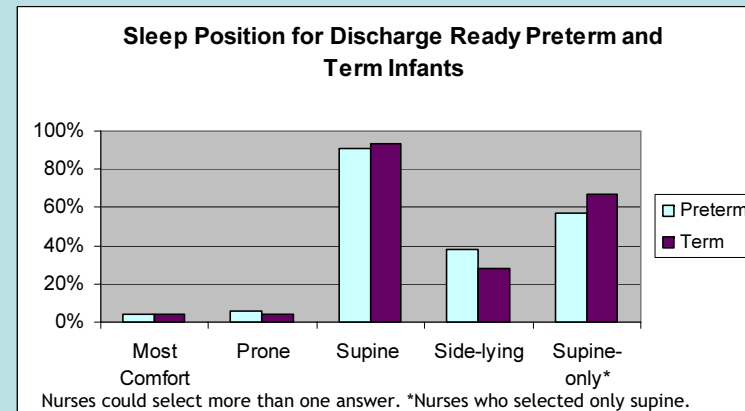
### Nursing Practice:

- ❖ 57% position discharge ready preterm infants exclusively supine for sleep
- ❖ 67% position term infants exclusively supine for sleep
- ❖ 46% use positioning aids/rolls in stable term infants' cribs
- ❖ 60% cover the head of the crib to block noise/light to encourage sleep

### Parent Education:

- ❖ 73% verbal, 53% written, 14% audio visual
- ❖ SIDS reduction topics
  - 84% back to sleep
  - 60% tummy to play
  - 57% separate sleep area and appropriate bedding
  - 53% effects of second hand smoke

## Results



## Clinical Implications

Parents mimic nursing behaviors observed in the hospital in the home setting. The AAP and the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD) urge nurses to not only discuss SIDS risk reduction measures, but also model them in the hospital. Placing an infant in the supine position for sleep is the single most effective intervention to lower the risk of SIDS. Parents are more apt to use the supine position at home if they both observed the position used by hospital nurses and received education about the recommendation.



## Conclusions

NICU nurses are in influential positions to educate parents and model SIDS risk reduction strategies. This study supports other published research that points to inconsistencies in nursing practice regarding implementation of methods to reduce the risk of SIDS.

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