

Factors associated with bed sharing and sleep position in Thai neonates

Abstract

Background: Sleep in a supine position and in a bed separate from but proximate to adults are recommended, in several western countries, to prevent Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS). Cultural differences and a lower rate of SIDS in Asian populations may affect concern with this problem and thus infant sleeping arrangements.

Objective: To study bed sharing and sleep position in Thai neonates and the relationship to infant and maternal characteristics.

Methods: A cross-sectional survey based on interviews with parents of infants aged 21 days old, conducted under the Prospective Cohort study of Thai Children.

Results: Of the total sample, 2236/3692 (60.6%) infants shared a bed with their parents. Sixty percent of the parents placed their infants to sleep in a supine position, 32.2% on their side and 4.9% in a prone position. Bed sharing was associated with older maternal age, higher education, Muslim mother, and with work status of professional career or unemployed. Placing the infants to sleep in a prone position was associated with infant birth weight of greater than 2500 g, older maternal age, higher education, Buddhist mother, mother with professional career, and middle class household economic status.

Conclusions: Infant bed sharing is a common practice in the Thai culture, as in other Asian countries. The prone sleep position is less common than in western populations. The main factor associated with both bed sharing and putting infants to sleep in the prone position was a higher maternal socioeconomic status (SES), in contrast to previous studies in some western countries in which both practices were associated with low maternal SES. Cultural differences may play an important role in these different findings.