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Infant wrapping as an evidence-based strategy to encourage settling and the utilisation of the supine sleep position


Objective
To identify knowledge, attitudes and practices of child health nurses relating to infant wrapping as an effective settling/sleep strategy.

Methods
A pre-test/post-test intervention design was used to explore knowledge, attitudes and practices relating to wrapping in a sample of child health nurses (n=182): a) pre-test survey; b) educational intervention incorporating evidence relating to infant wrapping; SIDS&KIDS endorsed infant wrapping pamphlet; Safe Sleeping recommendations. Emphasis was placed on infant wrapping as an effective settling strategy for parents to use as an alternative to prone positioning; c) post-test survey to evaluate intervention effectiveness.

Results
Pretest results identified wide variation in nurses’ knowledge, attitudes and practices of infant wrapping as a settling/sleep strategy. The intervention increased awareness of wrapping guidelines and self-reported practices relating to parent advice. Significant positive changes in nurses’ awareness of wrapping guidelines (p<0.001); to wrap in supine position only (p<0.001); and parental advice to use wrapping as an alternative strategy to prone positioning to assist settling/sleep (p<0.01), were achieved post-test.

Conclusions
Managing unsettled infants and promoting safe sleeping practices are issues routinely addressed by child health nurses working with parents of young infants. Queensland has a high incidence of prone sleeping. Infant wrapping is an evidence-based strategy to improve settling and promote supine sleep consistent with public health recommendations.

Infant wrapping guidelines are now included in Queensland Health’s state policy and Australian SIDSandKids information relating to safe infant sleeping. In communicating complex health messages to parents, health professionals have a key role in reinforcing safe sleeping recommendations and offering safe, effective settling/sleep strategies to address the non-recommended use of prone positioning for unsettled infants.

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