Safe Infant Sleep Environment

The Journal of Perinatal Education, 22(2), 66, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1891/1058-1243.22.2.66>

I wish to comment on the photo that appeared on the cover of the Fall 2012 issue of *The Journal of Perinatal Education* (JPE). The photo depicts a father sleeping with his infant on an adult bed surrounded by pillows and soft bedding. This is a sleep environment known to be associated with the most common cause of preventable death in infants: accidental suffocation while in bed (Borse & Sleet, 2009; Shapiro-Mendoza, Kimball, Tomashek, Anderson, & Blanding, 2009). Indeed, an infant who sleeps on an adult bed with another person has a 40-fold greater chance of dying suddenly and unexpectedly than an infant who sleeps alone, on his or her back in a safety approved, uncluttered crib (Scheers, Rutherford, & Kemp, 2003). This type of sleep environment is strongly recommended by the American Academy of Pediatrics's Task Force on SIDS as a major preventative strategy to reduce SIDS and other sleep-related deaths (Moon, 2011). The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' (2012) recently launched "Safe to Sleep" campaign reflects this recommendation as well. Because your publication has the potential to influence large numbers of individuals who care for expectant and new mothers, it was disheartening to see this image portrayed on the cover of your publication. Indeed, it could be seen as an endorsement by the international Lamaze community of this hazardous infant sleeping environment. All of us who care for mothers and infants need to be united in our commitment to promoting the infant safe sleep message in every way that we can. It will save babies' lives.

—Eileen Tyralla, MD, FAAP
Medical Director
Cribs for Kids

REFERENCES

- Borse, N., & Sleet, D. A. (2009). CDC Childhood injury report: Patterns of unintentional injuries among 0- to 19-year olds in the United States, 2000–2006. *Family & Community Health*, 32(2), 189.
- Moon, R. Y. (2011). SIDS and other sleep-related infant deaths: Expansion of recommendations for a safe infant sleeping environment, Task Force on Sudden Infant Death Syndrome. *Pediatrics*, 128(5), 1030–1039.
- Scheers, N. J., Rutherford, G. W., & Kemp, J. S. (2003). Where should infants sleep? A comparison of risk for suffocation of infants sleeping in cribs, adult beds, and other sleeping locations. *Pediatrics*, 112(4), 883–889.
- Shapiro-Mendoza, C. K., Kimball, M., Tomashek, K. M., Anderson, R. N., & Blanding, S. (2009). US infant mortality trends attributable to accidental suffocation and strangulation in bed from 1984 through 2004: Are rates increasing? *Pediatrics*, 123(2), 533–539.
- U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, National Institutes of Health. (2012, October). *Safe to sleep campaign*. Washington, DC: Author.

RESPONSE

Thank you for your letter regarding your concern about the photograph of the father and baby cuddling that appeared on the cover of the Fall 2012 issue of JPE.

Parent/baby interaction within the sleeping environment and the possibility of SIDS should be a concern for every health-care provider and educator. It is a complex issue without simple solutions.

An excellent resource for parents can be found on the [unicef.org.uk](http://www.unicef.org.uk) website "Caring for Your Baby at Night." In addition, JPE readers might also find the website for health-care professionals and educators at <http://www.isisonline.org.uk/hcp/> to be a valuable resource.

—Karin Cadwell, PhD, RN, FAAN, IBCLC, ANLC