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Modeling Safe Sleep Practices for the Newborn in the Hospital: Is it Happening?

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Modeling Safe Sleep Practices for the Newborn in the Hospital: Is it Happening?
Safe Sleep vs. Unsafe Sleep

Background:
- Despite extensive training, nurses have been noted to model unsafe sleep practices for the newborn in the hospital (Stringer, 2016).
- There is a reluctance of nurses to comply, notwithstanding the implementation of “Back to Sleep” programs, and documentation of parents educated in safe sleep practices (Patton, Stittner, Wright, & Kautz, 2015).
- Parents report they repeat behavior seen in the hospital at home (McMullen, Fioravanti, Brown, & Carey, 2016; Patton et al., 2015).
- Incidences of sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS) continue to occur; reduction rate has plateaued (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [CDC], 2018).

Methods:
Systematic review of scholarly literature in CINHAL, Google Scholar, and Pub Med, with key words: “SIDS,” “Safe sleep” AND “teaching,” OR “Nurses,” “modeled,” OR “Unsafe sleep,” OR “teaching,” OR “demonstration” for last five years.

Results:
Nurses were found to agree with many guidelines. Personal bias, or habit influenced poor implementation. Although provided the knowledge, some nurses continually placed infants in unsafe sleep positions, resulting in an inconsistency from knowledge to practice by nurses. Under-educated parents use sleep positions at home modeled by nurses in the hospital (McMullen et al., 2016; Patton et al., 2015).

Discussion:
Every nurse must model a consistent, safe sleep, message at every bedside interaction throughout the hospital stay (CDC, 2018; McMullen, et al., 2016; Patton et al., 2015; Stringer, 2016).

Recommended Interventions:
- Nurse re-education & mandatory declaration of education to include:
- Education to resolve primary reason for non-compliance; perceived risk of aspiration for supine positioning by nurses
- Awareness that modeled unsafe sleep behaviors are continued by parents at home.
- Avoid using items such as rolled blankets, bulb syringes to support unsafe positioning or propping the bassinet up in the crib while in the hospital.
- Non-supine positioning should be utilized only when medically indicated, and with clear education for parents.
- Nurse Champion to document and follow up on unsafe sleep observations.
- Safe sleep education to be disseminated to parents.
- Consider use of alternative bassinets in-hospital.