



Title	Bed Sharing, Pacifier, Breastfeeding and Cot Death – Is There an Association?
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Aim

To systematically review studies that had evaluated newborns and infants and the effect of sleeping alone or in the parents' bed, pacifier use, and/or breastfeeding. Outcomes were breastfeeding rates and cot death.

Conclusions and results

Forty studies that met the inclusion criteria were included. Only a few studies compared groups that were randomly allocated to one intervention or another. Hence, it is difficult to determine causation.

Because of the limitations in study design we cannot draw any firm conclusions about the factors we investigated. There is an increased risk for cot death with bed sharing if the mother has smoked during pregnancy. It is uncertain whether the risk of cot death is reduced with breastfeeding or with pacifier use, if co-sleeping encourages breastfeeding, if bed sharing is associated with increased risk of cot death in infants older than 8 weeks of age, or if the use of pacifiers influences overall breastfeeding. It is unclear whether bed sharing with newborns less than 8 weeks of age is harmful.

Methods

We systematically searched for studies of experimental and observational design in the following databases: Cochrane Library, MIDIRS, Cinahl, EMBASE, MEDLINE and SweMed, June 2004. The search was updated in February 2005.

Further research/reviews required

More randomized controlled trials are needed to investigate whether early introduction to pacifiers interferes with breastfeeding duration or the rates of full and partial breastfeeding. It is unlikely, but not impossible, to conduct randomized trials that investigate the effects of pacifiers and bed sharing on cot death. Such studies would need a very large number of participants.