Analyzing Methods to Improve Infant Sleep Safety

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Disclaimer: This project is submitted in partial fulfillment of the degree requirements of Worcester Polytechnic Institute. The views and opinions expressed herein are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the positions or opinions of the United States Consumer Product Safety Commission or Worcester Polytechnic Institute.
Presentation Outline

- Background
- Project Goals
- Methodology
- Findings
- Recommendations
The Problem

❖ Safe sleep can be difficult for parents and caretakers, especially if they are under a lot of stress

❖ Sudden Unexpected Infant Death (SUID) claims the lives of 3,500 seemingly healthy infants in the US every year

Source: Halo Innovations
Background

Sudden Unexpected Infant Death (SUID) Incidence Since 1990

Source: CDC
Project Goals

- Understand barriers that prevent caregivers from following AAP recommendations
- Identify organizations concerned with infant sleep safety
- Provide recommendations for methods to reduce sleep related deaths

Source: Halo Innovations
Methodology

- **Background research on SUID**
- **Evaluate Current Messaging**
  - Bare is Best
  - NICHD’s Safe to Sleep
  - B’More for Healthy Babies
- **Assess Infant Products**
  - ASTM Standards
  - Warning labels
  - Review incident data
- **Analyze Barriers to Adopting AAP Recommendations**
  - Literature Review
  - Focus Group
  - Stakeholder Interviews
- **Develop Recommendations**
Stakeholder Interviews

Non-Profits

Manufacturers

Messaging and Campaigns

Researchers
Focus Group

❖ Can you tell us about your personal experience following the AAP recommendations?
❖ Where is it that you get information about what products are safe?
❖ How do reviews and other parents influence your decision about how you will use a certain product?
❖ How can the presentation of safe sleep information be improved?

Source: Florida Department of Health
Findings

- Extensive network of safe sleep interested groups
- Behavior of caregivers and parents
- Social issues affecting safe sleep
Extensive network of safe sleep interested groups and organizations
Desperation for sleep often leads to unsafe behaviors
Caregivers want less risky alternatives to bed sharing

Source: Bambu Productions/The Image Bank/Getty Images
Caregivers generally know the recommendations, but they don’t understand reasoning.
Many parents are overwhelmed with information.
Parents often receive conflicting information
As consumers, parents are highly influenced by peers and other caregivers’ reviews.
Sleep environments are often depicted unsafely in media and advertising
“For the first two months or so, the safest way for babies to sleep is on their fronts, head to one side, or else curled up on one side. Then if they are sick there is no chance that they will choke.”


Many older caregivers are not up to date on current recommendations
“‘Preventable’ and ‘SIDS’ cannot be used in the same sentence.”

Many caregivers don’t think they can prevent SIDS but believe suffocation is preventable.
Parents in the U.S. lack national parental leave policy available in other industrialized countries

Source: World Policy Center
Messages on warning labels are unclear
Recommendations for CPSC Communications and Network

- Educate parents about how to reduce the risk of SUID while bedsharing
- Standardize sleep education across child care specialties
- Add safe sleep education to high school health curriculum
- Develop a suffocation based campaign
Recommendations for CPSC and Industry

Work with manufacturers and retailers to promote safe sleep through advertisements

Incentivize manufacturers and retailers to refute reviews from parents promoting unsafe product use

Update and improve warning labels

Source: Shutterstock
Parents balance many risks
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Questions or Comments?