

Dear Editor

As a pediatrician/physician/nurse practitioner/RN/observant consumer/parent/bereaved parent of a child who died of sudden infant death syndrome named \_\_\_\_\_, I am writing in response to the photo/display of a baby sleeping in your \_\_\_\_\_ on page \_\_\_\_\_. In this photo, you have an infant sleeping on his/her stomach/with a loose blanket/with bumpers/with soft items

The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) through their task force on Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) most recent policy statement for a safe infant sleep recommends that infants less than one year of age sleep in a crib or bassinet without blankets, pillows/positioners, bumpers or soft items and placed to sleep on their back to prevent death.

- Pillows, quilts, and comforters can obstruct a baby's nose or mouth, so should never be used in the crib.
- Crib bumper pads were initially designed to prevent injury or entrapment through wide crib slats. New crib standard require crib slat spacing to be <2-3/8 so bumpers are no longer needed and, in fact, present a hazard. Bumper pads have been implicated in deaths by suffocation, and strangulation<sup>1</sup>. Even mesh bumper pads are dangerous
- The predominant risk factor for sleep-related deaths in infants over 4 months of age was rolling into objects in the sleep area<sup>2</sup> so keeping the crib clear of stuffed animals, blankets and other soft items is critical
- Infant sleeping on the stomach is associated with more than double the risk of dying during sleep<sup>3</sup>

By publishing photos of babies sleeping with these items, or on their stomach, it normalizes, and in some cases, even glamorizes, this unsafe sleep habits and may encourage families to adopt these unsafe behaviors. Media messages have been very influential in decisions regarding sleep position<sup>45</sup>. Studies have shown that recommendations from physicians and nurses are combined with media materials in a parent's decision on sleep position<sup>6</sup> and that consistent demonstration of safe sleep by

<sup>1</sup> Thach BT, J Pediatr. 2007;151(3):271-274, 274.e1-274.e3

<sup>2</sup> Colvin JD, Collie-Akers V, Schunn C, Moon RY. Pediatrics. 2014;134(2).

<sup>3</sup> Moon, RY, Pediatrics. 2016; 138(5):e1-e34

<sup>4</sup> Willinger M JAMA. 2000;283(16):2135-2142

<sup>5</sup> Von Kohorn I, Arch Pediatr Adolesc Med. 2010;164(4):363-369.

<sup>6</sup> Willinger M, JAMA. 2000;283(16):2135-2142

the media increased the odds that a parent will place their child to sleep on their back by 54%. Mothers who believe their baby is comfortable sleeping on their back are 4 times more likely to place their baby to sleep on their back<sup>7</sup> so publishing images of content, happy and comfortable babies on their back can help promote this life-saving habit.

Please consider removing this photo and replacing it with one which demonstrates safe sleep practices. For more information, please see [SIDSRisk.org](http://SIDSRisk.org). If you replace this photo with a safe sleeping photo, please feel free to submit it for inclusion on the [SIDSRisk.org](http://SIDSRisk.org) wall of fame. You have the power to change cultural norms. You have the power to save babies.

Sincerely,

Insert your name here

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<sup>7</sup> Willinger M, JAMA. 2000;283(16):2135–2142