



UNIVERSITY OF  
OXFORD

NUFFIELD DEPARTMENT OF  
**PRIMARY CARE**  
HEALTH SCIENCES

The importance of  
considering *all* of the evidence when  
making decisions in healthcare

Kamal R. Mahtani





Did the advice change?  
When did the advice change?  
Why did the advice change?



## Sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS)

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Overview

Clinical trials

Sudden infant death syndrome

### Introduction

**Sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS) – also known as cot death – is the sudden, unexpected and unexplained death of an apparently well baby.**

In the UK, at least 300 babies die suddenly and unexpectedly every year. This statistic may sound alarming, but SIDS is rare and the risk of your baby dying from it is low.

Most deaths happen during the first six months of a baby's life. Infants born prematurely or with a low birthweight are at greater risk, and SIDS is also more common in baby boys.

SIDS usuallys occur when a baby is asleep, but it can occasionally happen while they are awake.

Parents can reduce the risk of SIDS by [not smoking](#) while pregnant or after the baby is born, and always placing the baby on their back when they sleep (see below).

### Useful links

NHS Choices links

[Babies who need special care](#)

[Reducing the risk of cot death](#)

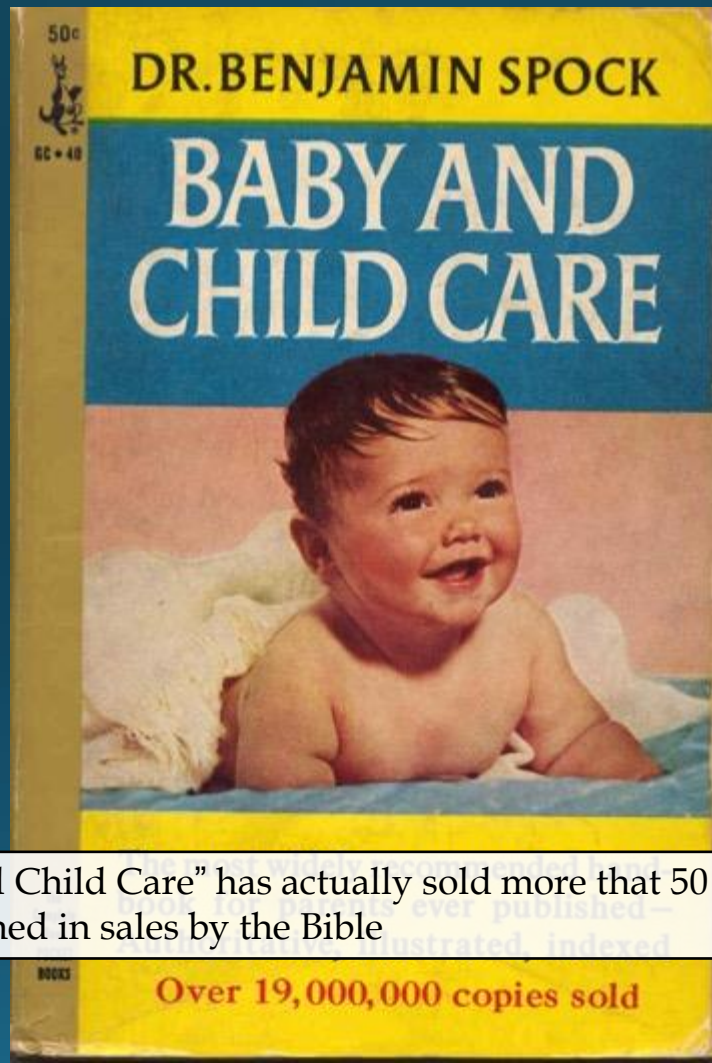
[Your baby's bedding](#)

External links

[Babyloss](#)

[The Lullaby Trust](#)

[Stillbirth & neonatal death charity \(Sands\)](#)

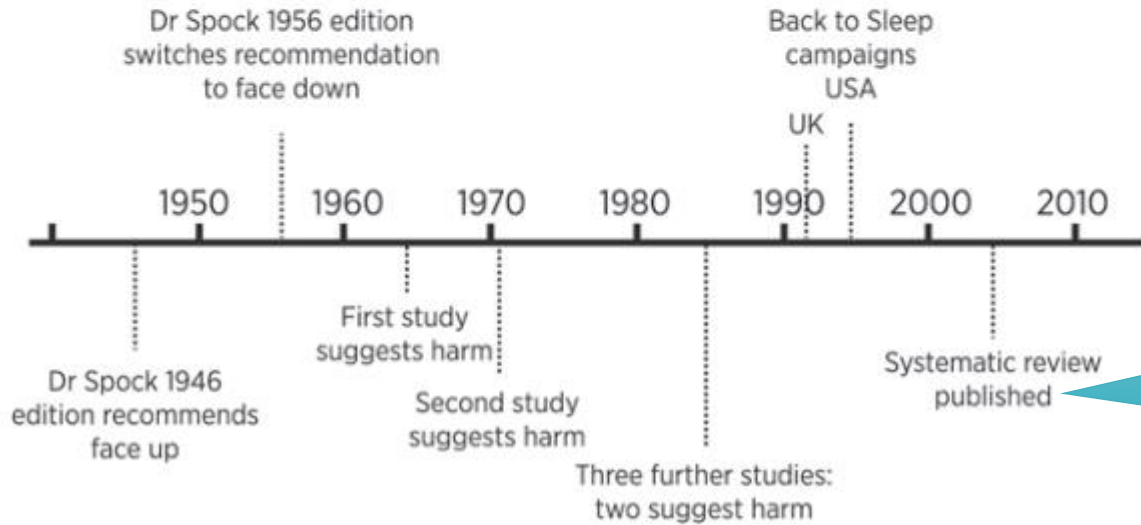


"Baby and Child Care" has actually sold more than 50 million copies, only outmatched in sales by the Bible

*'...disadvantages to a baby's sleeping on his back. If he vomits he's more likely to choke on the vomitus.*

*..I think it is preferable to accustom a baby to sleeping on his stomach from the start.'*

Dr Benjamin Spock



Over four fold increase risk of sudden infant death syndrome

# What is a “systematic review”?

- Begins with a question
  - *“What is the best position to put a baby to sleep on?”*
- Clear, transparent, reproducible way of searching for ALL available evidence on a topic



# What is a “systematic review”?

- Evidence is assessed for its “quality”
  - Is it good or bad evidence?
  - Was it a fair test/assessment of the treatment?
  - Bad quality evidence leads us further away from the true answer
- Evidence is summarised into a format that tries to answer the question
  - *“It would appear that putting a baby to sleep on their back is safer than on their front”*

# The importance of considering a summary of all available the evidence



# The importance of considering a summary of all available the evidence



# The importance of considering a summary of all available the evidence



The importance of considering a summary of all available studies

# BUT.....

How many studies are carried out but not published?

≈ 50%

# The importance of considering a summary of all available the evidence

Four more studies – never published!



Let's discuss...

# Key concepts

- Expert opinion v research evidence
- Importance of searching for, and summarising evidence in a "*systematic review*"
- Importance of trying to find the information that is "unpublished"



Any questions?

# What's our question?



Patients with atrial fibrillation

Old blood thinners  
(warfarin)

New blood thinners  
(NOACs)

↓ Risk

↓ Risk

