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Up to eat

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Background: Otitis media and respiratory tract infections are major causes of morbidity in infants and young children. The influence of feeding position of the infant in the pathogenesis of ear and airway diseases has not been well established.

Methods: We investigated the influence of instructing mothers to feed their 3-month old infants with their head in an upright position on infant ear and respiratory morbidity during a one-year follow-up. Mothers of 88 infants born during 2011 were instructed by trained nurses at Maternal-Child-Health clinics to feed their infants with their head in upright position (intervention group). The control group consisted of 75 mothers of infants of similar socioeconomic background who fed their infants regularly without any special instructions and were followed at another Maternal-Child-Health clinic. Feeding position was evaluated at the beginning and the end of the twelve-month study, and morbidity data of both groups were evaluated at every 3-month follow-up meeting.

Findings: Infants from the intervention group were fed at a more upright head position and had significantly less episodes of ear diseases, less respiratory infections, less episodes of prolonged fever and needed less bronchodilator inhalations and antibiotic courses than infants from the control group.

Conclusion: Instructing mothers to feed infants with their head in upright position led to less morbidity and treatment burden. The successful campaign against prone position of infants during sleep to prevent, "Sudden Infant Death Syndrome", could be reinforced to "back to sleep and up to eat".

Biography

Medical school at Hadassah University Hospital, Jerusalem, Israel. Pediatric Residency and Pediatric Pulmonary training at Hadassah Institute of Pulmonology, Jerusalem and Health Science Center, at Winnipeg, Canada. My main interest in the last two decades is in the diagnosis of asthma and its differentiation from other chronic respiratory diseases and aspiration syndromes, using specific bronchial challenges for asthma and the PCWheeze method to challenge young children who are unable to cooperate with regular lung function tests. The connection of feeding position of infants with upper and lower airways problems has lately been challenged.

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