

SUDI Nationwide Study

increasing understanding of Sudden Unexpected Death in Infancy

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CONTACT US

Melanie MacFarlane
Project Manager
Mob: 021.330370
Tel: 09-3776661
melanie.macfarlane@communio.co.nz
PO Box 7485, Wellesley Street, Auckland

WELCOME

*Tēnā koutou katoa, nau mai,
haere mai*

Welcome to the latest edition of the **SUDI Nationwide Study** newsletter, designed to provide you with regular updates on the progress of the study.

INTRODUCTION

The key aim of the 3-year Sudden Unexpected Death of an Infant (SUDI) Nationwide Study research project is to develop an understanding of New Zealand parenting practices especially related to baby sleep. The study is funded by the Health Research Council and led by Principal Investigator Prof. Ed Mitchell, University of Auckland. The study is actively supported and authorised by Judge A N MacLean, Chief Coroner.

OVERVIEW

In the December newsletter we described the process of collection of SUDI information for the Coroner and the research when an unexpected death of a baby less than one year of age occurs. In this newsletter we outline the process for Control families/whānau when they participate in the **SUDI Nationwide Study**.

WHY HAVE A CONTROL GROUP?

Although much useful information can be obtained by studying individual deaths, the importance of some infant care factors cannot be assessed without comparing it to a group of control families/whānau that is families where the baby hasn't died. Specific families are invited to

participate and if they consent, a questionnaire is completed. This consists of a series of questions to understand how they carry out 'parenting practices', especially in relation to baby's sleep time over a 24 hour period.

CONTROL GROUP

The project aims to interview more than 400 control families/whānau over three years. As described previously, SUDI Case families/whānau are those whose baby has died unexpectedly (not accidentally such as in a car crash). Control group families/whānau will have a living baby under a year old. Contact details of potential control group families are obtained by an ethically-approved process from each DHB. Each family/whānau is matched according to hospital of birth, gender, ethnicity and age at time of interview.

- SUDI control group families/whānau first receive a letter outlining the research and its aims.
- The interview collects demographic information about the family/whānau; detailed sleep and bedding details; health/pregnancy history of both mother and baby; social information such as smoking at present and during pregnancy and home rental or ownership.
- The interview includes placement of a doll to demonstrate sleeping and waking position of baby on a nominated date. This is photographed for further analysis.
- Additionally, the room that baby sleeps in has detailed measurements such as size, temperature and placement of a

bassinets or cots if used by the baby.

PROCESS FOR CONTROL GROUP

To be successful in recruiting families the SUDI Liaison must:

- Promote the notion that time is right in New Zealand to understand how modern parents of new babies practice parenting and manage their baby.
- Make first contact by sending a letter to control families/whānau, which explains that a SUDI Liaison will telephone and ask if they have considered taking part in the research.
- Telephone the control family/whānau and ask if they agree to participate in the research. If they agree, the SUDI liaison will set up a mutually agreeable time to meet them in their home. Families/whānau can pull out of the research at any time
- Ensure informed consent is obtained before information can be collected for the research project.
- Visit the control family/whānau in their home and record their in-depth answers so that they can be analysed in comparison to those families who have experienced the trauma of a SUDI.
- Remain sensitive to the notion to do no harm to families/whānau.

IDENTIFYING WHĀNAU FOR CONTROL GROUP

The SUDI Liaison team link with each DHB in various ways. These links are essential in locating matched potential control families/whānau

and we thank all Perinatal Maternal Mortality Review Co-ordinators who supply the information that allows the first steps of the research with the Control group to be carried out. The research interview takes about two hours. The SUDI Liaison team are extremely grateful to families/whānau who consent to the interview and understand that it is a gift to all families/whānau in Aotearoa to help give greater understanding about the tragedy of a SUDI.

OUR LOGO



Our logo and banner was designed by SUDI Liaison (and resident artist), Shelley Jonas and is used in all project communications and documentation we produce. The S graphic image in 'SUDI' is stylised to represent a traditional Māori fish hook, **hei matau**. It has a graceful, fulsome curving belly, long sweeping neck and purposeful top bar with which to secure the fishing line. Hei Matau is a symbol for strength, determination, authority, prosperity, abundance, good health, fertility, good luck and safe travel across water.

SUDI LIAISON FAREWELL AND WELCOME

The SUDI Liaison team were sad to farewell Jazz Heer earlier this year. Jazz covered the lower North Island region and will be missed. However, we warmly welcome Judy McIntyre,

from Palmerston North. Judy now covers the lower North Island and has begun to make contact with those of you who are key to the effective family-focused aims of the SUDI Liaison role in this region.



Judy McIntyre, Lower North Island SUDI Liaison.

RECRUITMENT OPPORTUNITY

We are looking to appoint an additional person to the Auckland team to help cover the central and upper North Island. If you or anyone you know is interested in this opportunity and wants to find out more, further information is available on SEEK or from Melanie MacFarlane.

FINAL WORDS

Once this research is complete the information will aid those who work with families of new-born. It is expected that after detailed analysis that there will be evidence based information that would assist parents /caregivers to modify specific practices in parenting that may reduce the SUDI rate further.

This advice will be appropriate to their individual and cultural circumstances as we know that no two families are the same.

Mauri ora!
