Pharmacist Curriculum on Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) Risk Reduction

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**Background**

Research indicates that pharmacists can benefit from a continuing education program on Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) as the role of the pharmacist expands. Alldrege and Koda-Kimble published an opinion piece in the American Journal of Pharmaceutical Education which stated that pharmacist roles of prescribing, educating and monitoring patients leads to job satisfaction. They also recommend that pharmacists take a larger role in patient care. Several studies indicate that patients are willing and open to receiving information from their pharmacists regarding issues related to health promotion. This seems to be especially pertinent for mothers of young children according to a study conducted by Hodgson and Wong which found that 61 percent of the mothers they surveyed were visiting the pharmacist at least once a month. 22 percent stated they received advice and of that 87 percent reported the suggestions to be helpful or very helpful.

**Methods**

The Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD) conducted a Partners’ meeting in the development of a Continuing Education (CE) module for Pharmacists. Focus groups were conducted with targeted objectives to test the curriculum in Baltimore, MD and Jackson, MS. They included student pharmacists and a representation from diversified practice settings (e.g., hospital, community, corporate, clinical, acute care, rural, urban). In an effort to address health inequities, pharmacists in underserved communities were a demographic data point. Also, one focus group was specifically all African American pharmacists. The focus groups findings substantively supported current research and opinion pieces by noted pharmacists which states that pharmacists roles are expanding and they are an untapped resource for providing health promotion information. It also concluded that pharmacists had a limited perspective regarding SIDS and substantively increased their knowledge through the CE module. A CE program was designed to reach pharmacists through a variety of vehicles such as: live trainings and an on-line CE activity to be delivered to pharmacists. Pharmacist associations and boards were contacted to set up sessions at scheduled meetings.

**Pharmacy Partners**

American Association of Colleges of Pharmacy
American College of Clinical Pharmacy
American Society of Health System Pharmacists
National Alliance of State Pharmacy Associations
National Association of Boards of Pharmacy
National Association of Chain Drug Stores
National Community Pharmacists Association
First Candle (SIDS Alliance)

**Learning Objectives for the CE are:**

1. Define SIDS.
2. List the critical SIDS risk-reduction messages for expectant and future parents, grandparents, relatives, daycare providers, babysitters, and other caregivers
3. List four barriers to back sleeping.
4. Discuss potential opportunities pharmacists could serve as educators about SIDS.
5. Describe points of contact to effectively communicate SIDS risk-reduction messages to parents/caregivers.

**Sample Slides from the CE Module**

**Results**

The focus groups and sessions strongly supported the openness and appropriateness of pharmacists in promoting the safe infant sleep messaging to expecting families, potential grandparents, childcare providers, and the general population. They stated that pharmacists were not familiar with the Back to Sleep Campaign (BTS) or SIDS. Sessions gathered information about practice settings and feedback from participants for dissemination of the message. Over 560 pharmacists have completed the sessions in Washington, DC, Ohio, New York, Nevada, Wyoming, Nebraska, Maryland, and Texas. Pharmacists CE activity explains the latest research on SIDS and ways to reduce SIDS risk. Earn 1.25 credit hours or 0.125 CE units (CEUs) from the Maryland Pharmacy CE Coordinating Council. Access the online CE at http://www.nichd.nih.gov/SIDS/pharmacistcourse/Welcome.aspx.

Pre and post test consisting of 10 multiple choice questions were utilized. 382 Pharmacists and 320 students have completed the program. Participants averaged 55.8 percent on the pretest and 81-89 percent on the post test with an average increase in assessment scores of 26-34%. There was no statistical difference between the pharmacists and students.

**Possible Roles You Could Play as Pharmacists?**

1. Asking an expectant mother, father, or a family member about how/where baby will be sleeping.
2. Providing education to women during pregnancy about SIDS.
3. Providing a Safe Sleep brochure with prenatal vitamins, iron, folic acid, infant antibiotics, multivitamins, eye drops, or other prescription or non-prescription purchases.
4. Placing Safe Sleep brochures near infant formula, baby food, diaper products, diapers, thermometers.
5. Sharing Safe Sleep information with your families and community.

**Conclusions**

1. After completing the CE, pharmacists can increase their capabilities of discussing SIDS, safe sleep environments and protective factors by gaining in-depth knowledge of the most recent scientific and evidence-based information.
2. Pharmacists noted that the information was relevant and applicable to their practice.
3. Pharmacists would like to see information about OTC for infants included in the curriculum regarding current FDA recommendations and teaching points to families and the impact of infections on SIDS deaths.
4. Scheduling sessions continues to be challenging due to limited opportunities at national conferences and member restrictions, and competing topics.

**References**