Reviewer's report

Title: A qualitative study in parental perceptions and understanding of SIDS-reduction guidance in a UK bi-cultural urban community

Version: 2
Date: 23 October 2015
Reviewer: Jennifer Doering

Reviewer's report:

• Major Compulsory Revisions
None

• Minor Essential Revisions

1. Did the authors assess whether there was any floor sleeping in either group of participants? Were any additional probing questions asked to determine if the ‘bed-sharing’ environment was an adult mattress on a box spring, frame, or floor? Was there assessment as to whether a traditional mattress was used or whether a thin mat (which may not have the same physical properties as a regular bed mattress) was used? Given how different baby sleep practices were between the white British women and Pakistani women, might it be a limitation worth mentioning.

2. The paper and table 2 indicate “cot or similar”, but was this a forced choice response or a determination made by the researchers upon hearing the mother’s response to their question? What does the word ‘similar’ mean? Did the authors assess what actual products parents placed their babies in for sleep? Babies are known to sleep in car seats, bouncy chairs, swings, prams, sidecar co-sleepers, in-bed co-sleepers and many other products. Perhaps clarifying what ‘similar’ means would be helpful.

3. Line 274: Thank you for noting that the ‘single simple message’ is ineffective. In this same sentence, perhaps consider whether using the phrase ‘different approach’ is the best response or mentioning ‘multiple approaches’ or ‘multiple tailored approaches’. By mentioning the single message, just re-creating the singular message by using a different approach isn’t what your findings suggest. Your findings suggest that multiple approaches or approaches tailored to an individual’s or population’s needs is perhaps what is truly needed to advance adherence to SIDS reduction principles.

4. Line 274: Similarly, is there any more specific guidance or theories you could offer the reader as having the potential for catalyzing the development of new approaches? It is one thing to say ‘we need a different approach’, but the next question the readership will ask is ‘well, what do you suggest?’. The fact that there are so few alternatives and so little theory development in the area of infant sleep safety and SIDS reduction is precisely why the science isn’t advancing. What might your data hint or suggest at for alternatives? Are there theories being
used around health behavior change or public health (e.g., the socioecological model comes to mind) that you might suggest that scientists and researchers can start to explore?

5. Line 274 – after this paragraph, have you thought about adding the suggestion that more quantitative approaches be developed to determine the relative risk reduction in the use of particular practices? The finding that women think they can exchange one SIDS/SUID reduction practice for another on a 1:1 basis is a key finding of this study. If women think they can exchange one risk reduction practice for another, perhaps evidence to counter this might help increase adherence to the most efficacious interventions. And perhaps we need to be modifying statistical approaches and analyses to see which reduction practices offer the greatest benefit? This would certainly be a challenging prospect statistically and would likely need to happen around a better defined issue like sleep-related infant death instead of SIDS, but it may be worth suggesting to the readership to advance thinking in the field beyond its current limitations.

• Discretionary Revisions

6. Please define “feet-to-foot” as this is a phrase that may be unique and distinct to the UK and unfamiliar to readers outside the UK.

7. Please define “sleeping bags”. In the USA, sleeping bags are used for camping. I think that the authors may mean a sleeping bag is the same as a ‘sleep sack’ or swaddle sack, but again, this is a phrase that is unique to the UK. If a reader in the US were to read ‘sleeping bag’, they may be confused as these would obviously be suffocating environments for babies (older children and adults use them for camping or sleeping on the ground/floor).

Level of interest: An article of outstanding merit and interest in its field

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

Declaration of competing interests:

I declare that I have no competing interests