

The Family Bed Defended

Written by Karen Squires

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The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) and the Juvenile Products

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It unlikely that a parent will roll over a baby and smother it unless the parent is using drugs, alcohol, or is in some way unable to arouse from sleep normally. Babies have built in alarm systems that arouses them if their air is reduced. Have you ever had a baby out on a windy day. The young baby panics quickly when the wind blows in their face and they can't breathe. A baby that is choking will also react alarmingly. If you happened to roll on your baby, you would be awakened by a startled baby, instinct having kicked in, crying from the discomfort. Another reason it's unlikely you'll roll over your baby. Adults sleep in beds without rails. Do we fall off the bed? I don't. You have the same ability to stay off your baby.

At the risk of sounding sexist I'll say that I believe mothers, in many cases, are more aware of baby at night than fathers. Mother nature has it that mothers do most of the baby care while fathers hunt for food. We had our baby sleep between me and the wall and daddy slept on the outer edge.

Dr. William Sears insists that it's far safer for babies to sleep with their parents than not to. Crib-related death takes more babies each year than deaths caused by the family bed. Family bed deaths are an average of 64 per year while crib-related deaths takes about 2500.

I wonder why the CPSC and JPMA are not interested in making the family bed a safe environment. I wonder why those two organizations have teamed up in the first place. Could it be to get us to buy more cribs? I hope not. The JPMA is a multimillion dollar industry that stands to profit from scared parent running out and buying cribs.

How accurate is the data that the CPSC is using to support their claim that the family bed is unsafe? There is disturbing advertisement evidence that the information upon which these definitive claims are made is incomplete, unreliable and misguided. The CPSC's data was collected from death certificates, coroner's reports and other anecdotal sources. Circumstances surrounding the deaths, such as parental intoxication, are not recorded in these records.

In addition, the determination of the cause of death is often subjective and is not always consistent even in comparable situations. In many areas of the country, infants who may have died from SIDS or other physical ailments in the parental bed are often recorded as cases of overlying. iVillage/ParentsPlace.com

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