



What is SUID?

The term ‘sudden unexpected infant death’ (SUID) means the sudden death of an infant under one year of age that when first discovered did not have an obvious cause. SUID includes deaths that are later explained, such as accidental suffocation or strangulation in bed (ASSB), as well as deaths that remain unexplained after a thorough investigation, review of clinical history, and autopsy, which are known as “sudden infant death syndrome” (SIDS).

SUID is the leading cause of death of infants one month to one year old in the U.S. Known risk factors include placing an infant to sleep on its stomach, cigarette smoke exposure, bedsharing, and soft bedding or toys in the sleeping environment. Despite known risk factors, at this time, we do not know what causes SIDS or how to prevent it other than to minimize risk. For example, an estimated 800 infant deaths in the US could be prevented if no women smoked during the three months prior to pregnancy.

SUID Facts

The U.S. ranks 32nd of 35 developed countries in infant mortality where SUID accounts for more than 3600 infant deaths annually. Approximately 6 in 1000 children die of all causes before their first birthday. Of these, SUID occurs in roughly 1 in every 1,000 births. *Source: CDC/NCHS, National Vital Statistics System, Compressed Mortality File*

While SUID rates declined significantly after the ‘Back to Sleep’ campaign in the 1990’s, rates of SUID have been roughly flat since then. We also continue to see significant racial and ethnic differences. Variations in the investigation and reporting of SUID can adversely affect the ability to reliably track SUID trends. And, the rate of change in the sub components of SUID rates are a result of diagnostic changes and not the rate of change of each component.

Source: Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development

Infant Mortality

