

January 18, 2024

Dear Colleague,

March is Sudden Unexplained Death in Childhood (SUDC) Awareness Month.

Throughout the entire month of March, [the SUDC Foundation](#) will be leading a global movement to raise awareness of Sudden Unexplained Death in Childhood (SUDC). We invite you to help us shine a light on SUDC and join us in raising awareness in the medical community this March.

I am a pediatrician and the Vice President at the SUDC Foundation. I was unaware of SUDC until it affected our family directly when our happy and healthy 17-month-old son Conor died during a nap on October 25, 2016. His cause of death was undetermined. Our world was shattered with Conor's death. I felt betrayed by my medical education that I did not know this could occur.

My colleagues were equally unaware of SUDC. Fortunately, our family was connected to the SUDC Foundation, where we were given the opportunity to connect with other families who had experienced similar losses. We received emotional support and an opportunity to participate in a research study. Through these connections, we learned that there were striking similarities in children affected by SUDC and that there was a gap in medical awareness relative to this category of death.

I hope that you will take the time to read about SUDC and the SUDC Foundation...

SUDC is the sudden and unexpected death of a child 12 months of age or older which remains unexplained after a thorough death investigation is conducted. According to CDC data, approximately 450 children between the ages of 1 and 18 are affected by SUDC annually. SUDC is the fifth leading category of death in children between the ages of 1 and 4 and yet it is not a part of medical education and there is no targeted federal funding to support research. Sadly, due to this lack of awareness, many medical professionals do not feel equipped to manage the needs of these families.

While SUDC is currently both unpredictable and unpreventable, there have been research advances that are improving our understanding of this category of death. Studies have shown that 30% of children affected by SUDC have a history of febrile seizures and a [recent study](#) published in **Neurology**, January 2024, examining crib videos of 7 children, indicated convulsive movements prior to their death. There has also been a [study](#) showing de novo genetic mutations in cardiac and brain muscle cells in some children affected by SUDC. It is likely that there is not one unified diagnosis explaining SUDC, but rather multiple underlying diagnoses. These research findings are highlighting the need for future research to identify which children are at higher risk for these deaths with an ultimate goal of prevention.

Perhaps you will only see 1 family in your career affected by SUDC, but you will make a tremendous difference if you can support them through this unthinkable tragedy.

Here's how you can help shine a light on SUDC...

- ★ [The SUDC Foundation](#) has a multitude of resources available to professionals who care for families after the sudden, unexpected death of a child. You can learn more at <https://sudc.org/medical-professionals/>. Please consider sharing this resource with your colleagues.
- ★ Gain insight by reading & sharing: [Pediatricians can play important role after a child's sudden unexplained death](#), AAP News, March 12, 2020.
- ★ Request a Grand Round/ Lunch & Learn Presentation to learn more about SUDC by emailing: info@sudc.org.
- ★ Take [The Unexplained Pediatric Deaths: Investigation, Certification & Family Needs](#) **FREE** 5-part webinar series with **FREE CME**. Click [HERE](#) for more information and to register.
- ★ [Refer](#) an affected family to the SUDC Foundation for our trauma informed supports & services and research opportunities.
- ★ Even if a cause of death is found after a thorough death investigation, the SUDC Foundation can support families with **FREE** and confidential, trauma informed care.
- ★ Please follow the SUDC Foundation on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#) and [LinkedIn](#), and tag us and share our posts throughout the month using #SUDCAwareness.

For inquiries or to order your FREE SUDC Awareness Monthly Kit, please contact The SUDC Foundation at: info@sudc.org.

We thank you in advance for your support and helping us work towards our vision of a world without SUDC.

Sincerely,



Erin Bowen, M.D.
Vice President, The SUDC Foundation