



**Safer sleep for infants: Past, Present and ?Future.**

**What have we learned in the past 200 years?**

Peter Fleming

**NCMD September 2022**



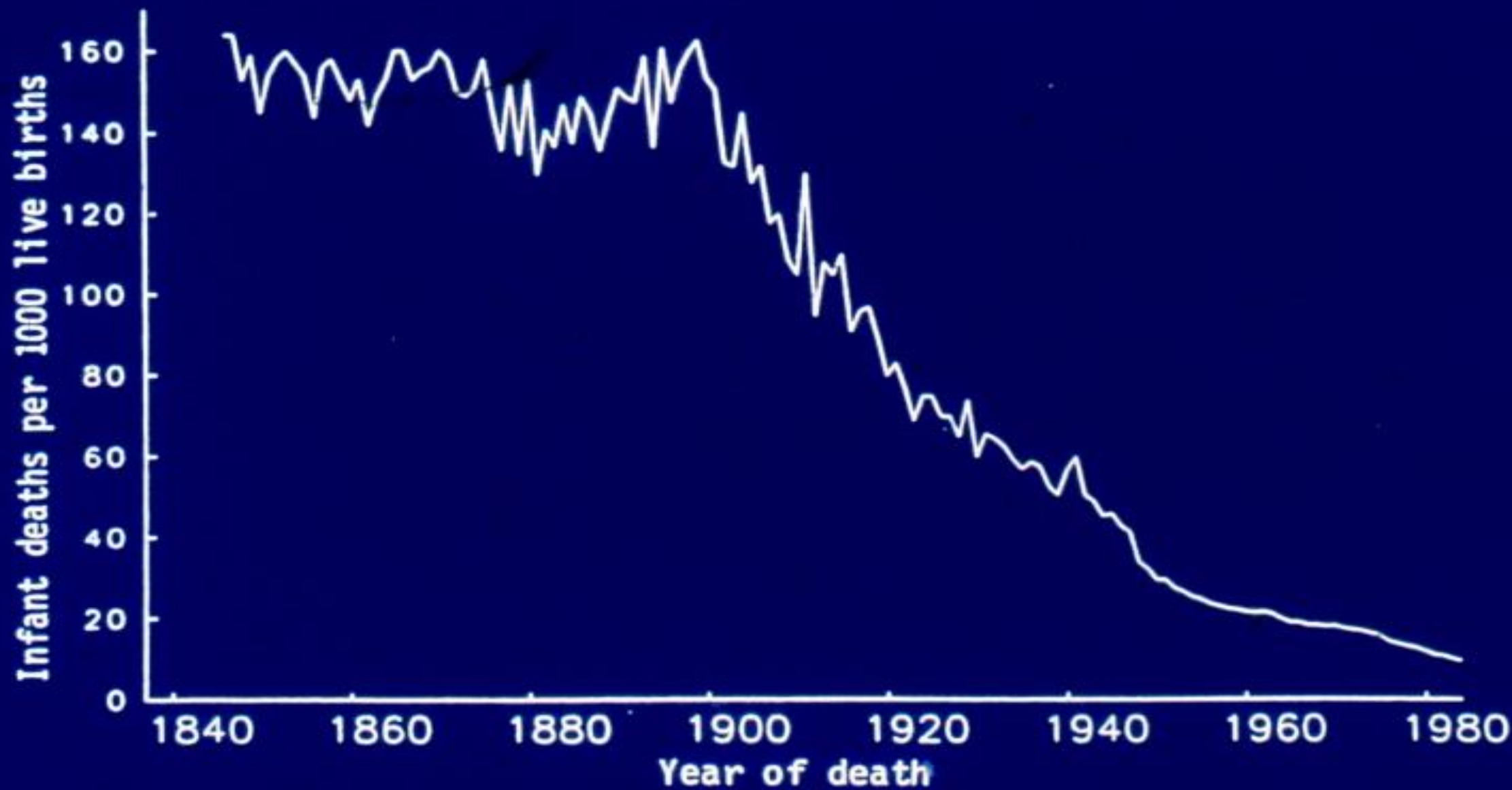
# The Judgement of Solomon

(Rubens 1617)

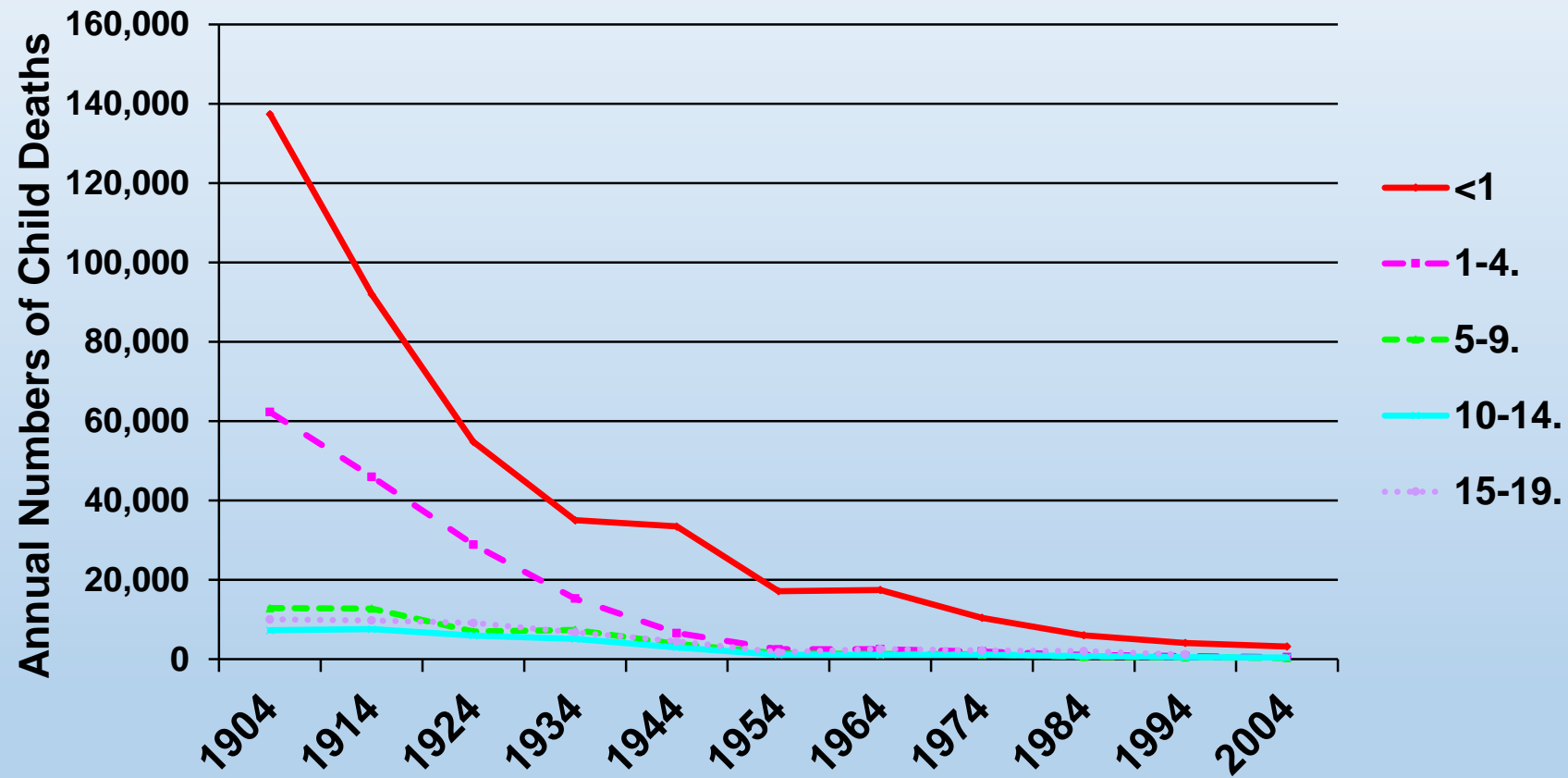


Gin Lane.  
Hogarth 1751

# Infant mortality, England and Wales, 1846-1984



# Childhood deaths in the UK



Source: Sidebotham & Fleming (2007)

# What is an unexpected death?

The death of a child which was not anticipated as a significant possibility 24 hours before the death

or

where there was a similarly unexpected collapse leading to or precipitating the events which led to the death

# Child Death Review

## Statutory and Operational Guidance (England) 2018

*“A coordinated multi-agency response (on-call health professional, police investigator, duty social worker), should be triggered if a child’s death:*

- is or could be due to external causes;*
- is sudden and there is no immediately apparent cause (including SUDI/C);*
- occurs in custody, or where the child was detained under the Mental Health Act;*
- where the initial circumstances raise any suspicions that the death may not have been natural;  
or*
- in the case of a stillbirth where no healthcare professional was in attendance”.*

# Definition of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS)

*“The sudden death of an infant, which is unexplained after review of the clinical history, examination of the circumstances of death, and post-mortem examination”*

*( Stavanger 1994)*



Unexpected infant deaths: What have we learned?

***“Considerable fear and anxiety surrounds SIDS.***

***Thus, it is not surprising that the public waits eagerly for any information that would suggest a means of preventing these tragedies.***

***The press, in response, is quick to report “new and exciting” observations and hypotheses regarding possible causation and prevention”.***

***Alfred Steinschneider 1975***

# Current Advice to reduce the risk of SIDS 2000-2022

## **Non-controversial**

1. Supine sleep in “feet to foot” position in cot
2. Breast feed your baby
3. Avoid tobacco smoke exposure (before and after birth)
4. Share a room with parents - day and night
5. Avoid heavy wrapping – use blankets or sleeping bags not duvets
6. Don't co-sleep on sofa
7. Avoid pillows, loose bedding and head covering

# **Current Advice to reduce the risk of SIDS 2000-2022**

## **More Controversial (not universally accepted)**

- 1. Avoid all bed-sharing ?**
- 2. Use a dummy (pacifier)?**
- 3. Avoid (or encourage) swaddling?**

# Where do babies sleep?

- World wide the vast majority (probably more than 90%) of babies sleep adjacent to and on the same surface as their mother.
- In the USA up to 40% of infants regularly share a sleep surface with their mother *(McKenna J.J. 2007)*
- In the UK on any night 20- 25% of infants under 6 months of age share a sleep surface with their mother. *(Ball H and Blair P Arch Dis. Child. 2004;89: 1106-1110)*

**Where “should” babies sleep?**

**Conflicting advice**



# The Daily Telegraph

## London swings back

Capital overtakes Paris as Europe's top weekend break  
Report Page 12



## Film on Friday

Verdicts on A Mighty Wind, Girl with a Pearl Earring and Runaway Jury Pages 19-21

www.telegraph.co.uk

BRITAIN'S BEST-SELLING QUALITY DAILY

Friday, January 16, 2003 Price 36p (10c)

# Don't sleep with your baby

■ Sharing a bed raises the risk of cot death ■ Advice to be changed for first eight weeks

**By David Greenhalgh, Science Correspondent**

RESEARCHERS have advised that baby beds should be shared with a parent, rather than with another child, to reduce the risk of cot death.

One of the biggest studies of its kind has concluded that bed-sharing with another child is a "small, but significant" higher risk of death for babies.

The researchers for the study at Oxford, Oxford, a study that advised parents to share their beds with their babies, especially during the first eight weeks of a baby's life.

The researchers said it would be surprising if the advice to share beds was not given.

Previously, only parents who smoked, who were excessively tired or under the influence of drugs or alcohol were told not to share a bed with their babies.

But sharing a bed is now the norm. Many parents who do not share their beds with their babies, but do share their beds with their babies, are told not to share a bed with their babies.

The researchers of the study said that the risk of cot death is higher for babies who share their beds with another child, especially during the first eight weeks of a baby's life.



## Prison chief is attacked over race sacking

**By David Greenhalgh**

A PRISON officer who was told "a sentence was" after being sacked for being racist about Osama bin Laden following the September 11 attacks, says he claims the officer breached prison rules.

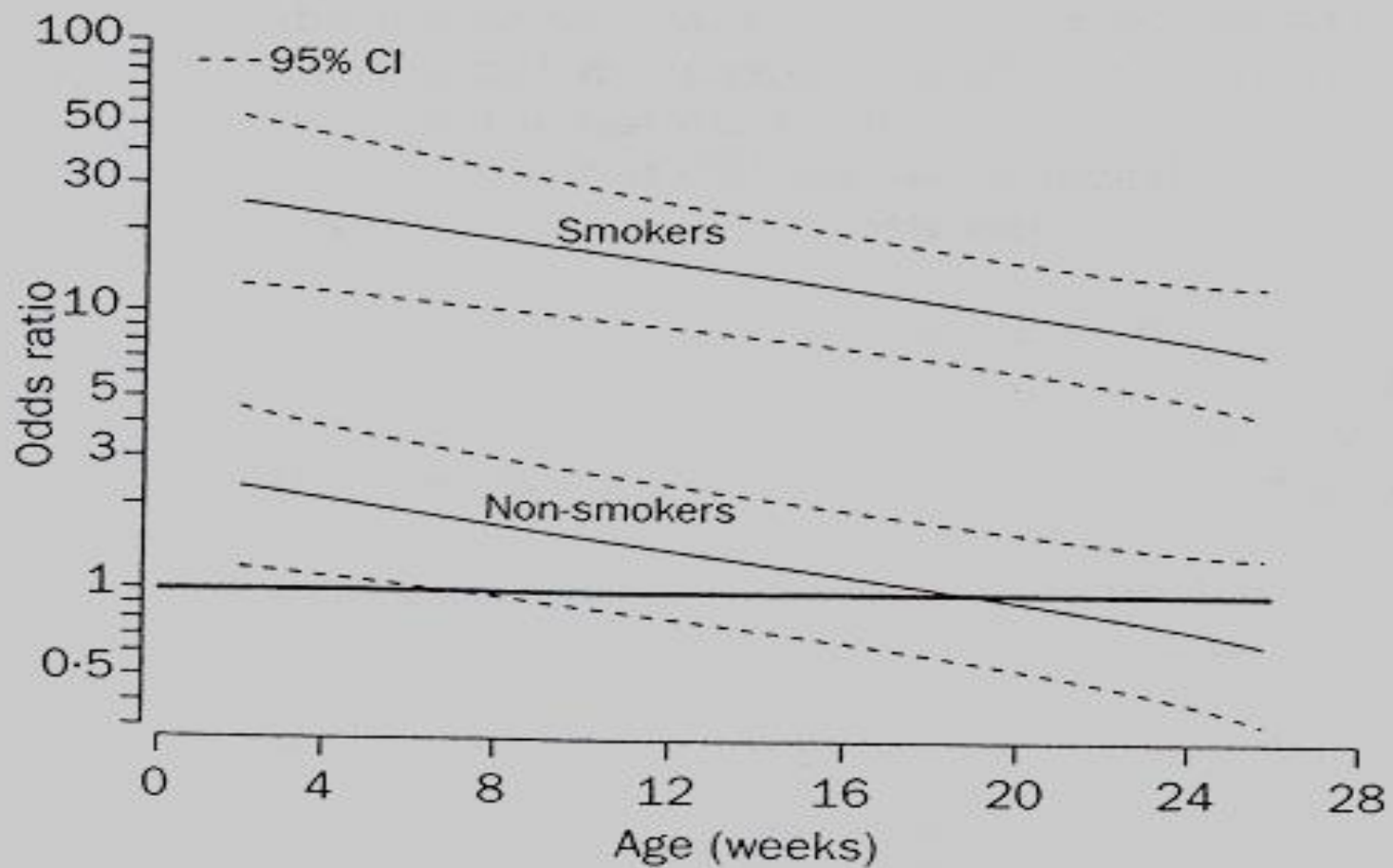
In a shocking indictment of the British prison system, the Prison Service has announced that it has sacked a government minister for "racism".

A man, widely regarded as a hero, has been sacked for being racist about Osama bin Laden following the September 11 attacks.

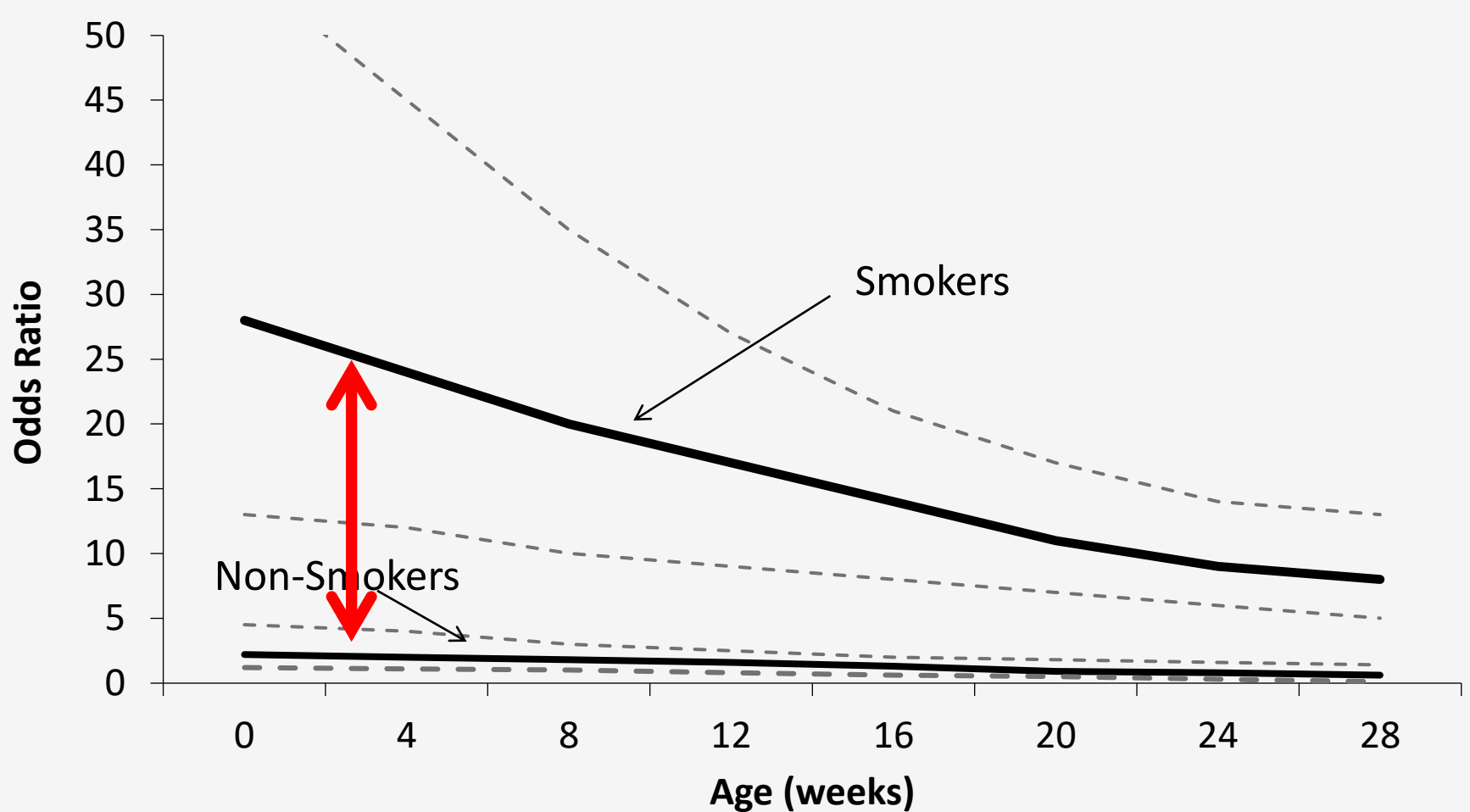
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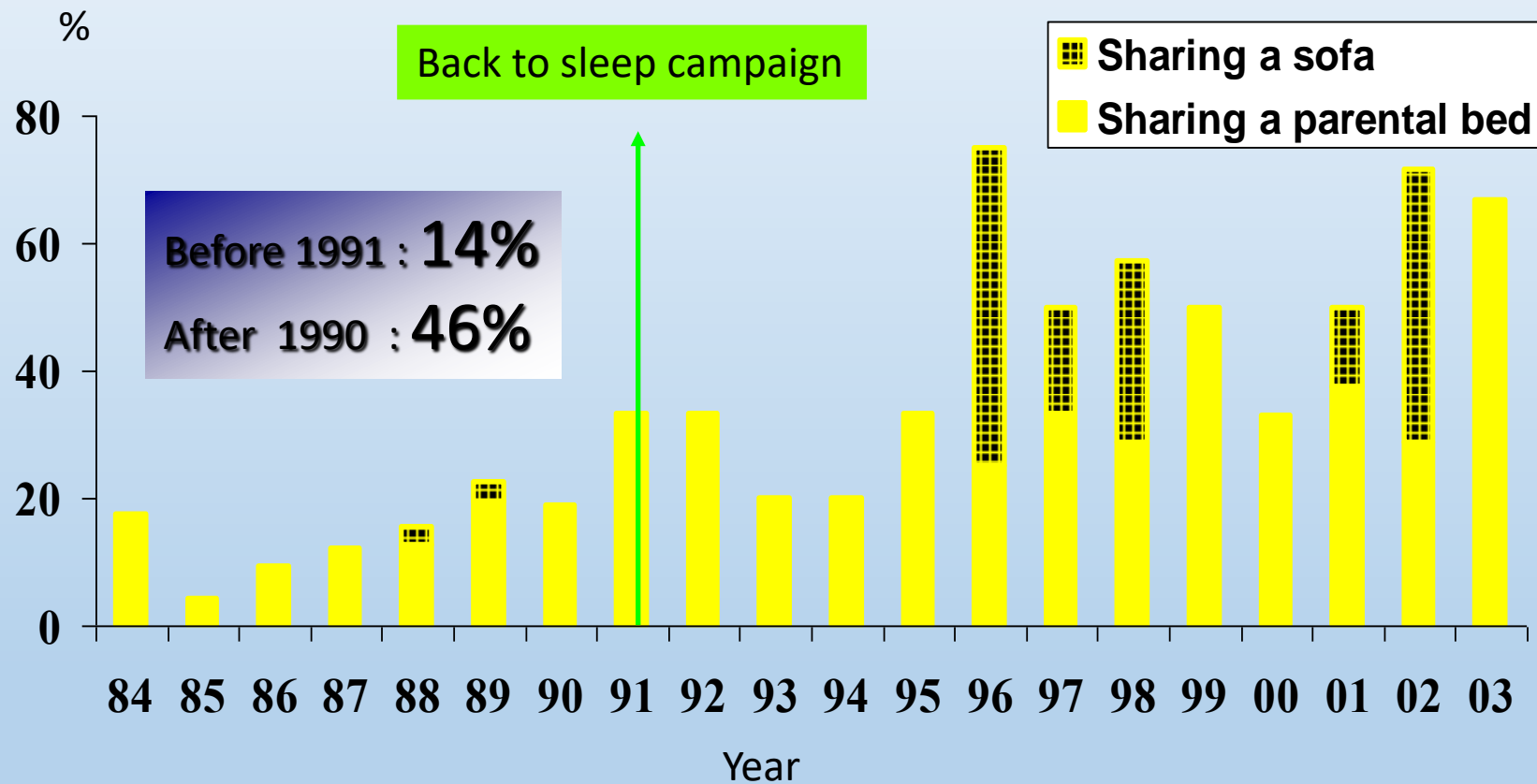
**ORs (log scale) for SIDS and 95% CIs of bed-sharing by infant age and mother smoking or not during pregnancy**



**ORs (NO LOG SCALE) for SIDS and 95% CI of bed-sharing by infant age and mother smoking or not during pregnancy**

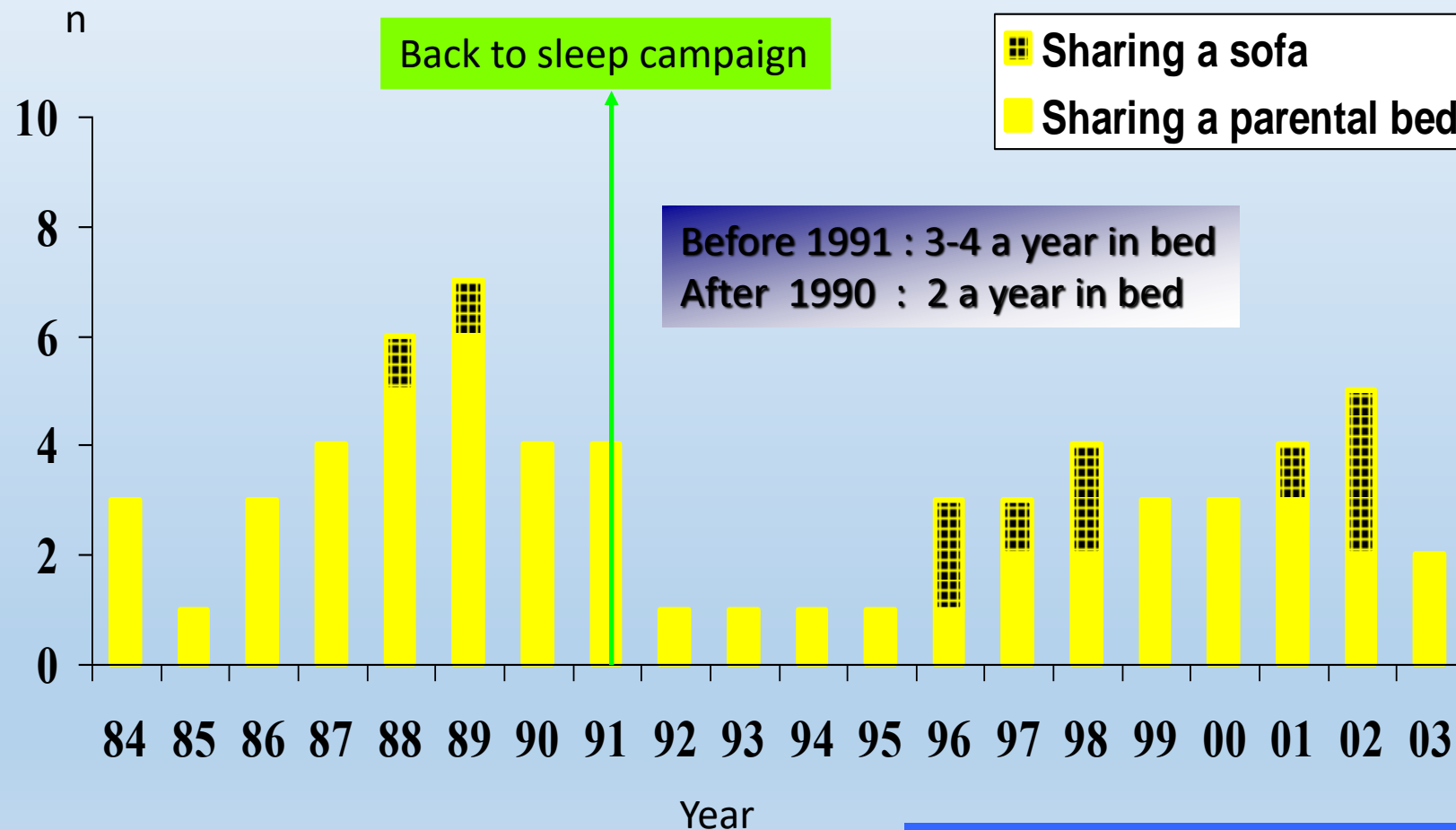


# Proportion of co-sleeping SIDS



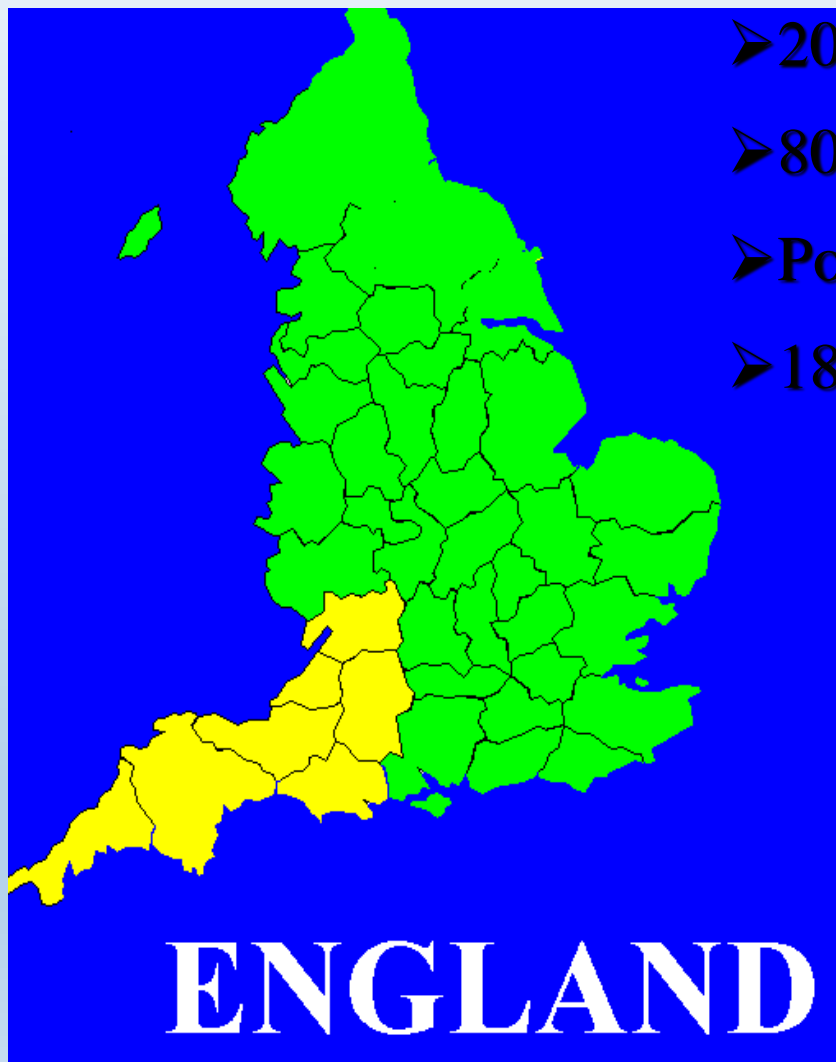
Source : Avon Longitudinal study

# Avon Data : Actual number of co-sleeping SIDS



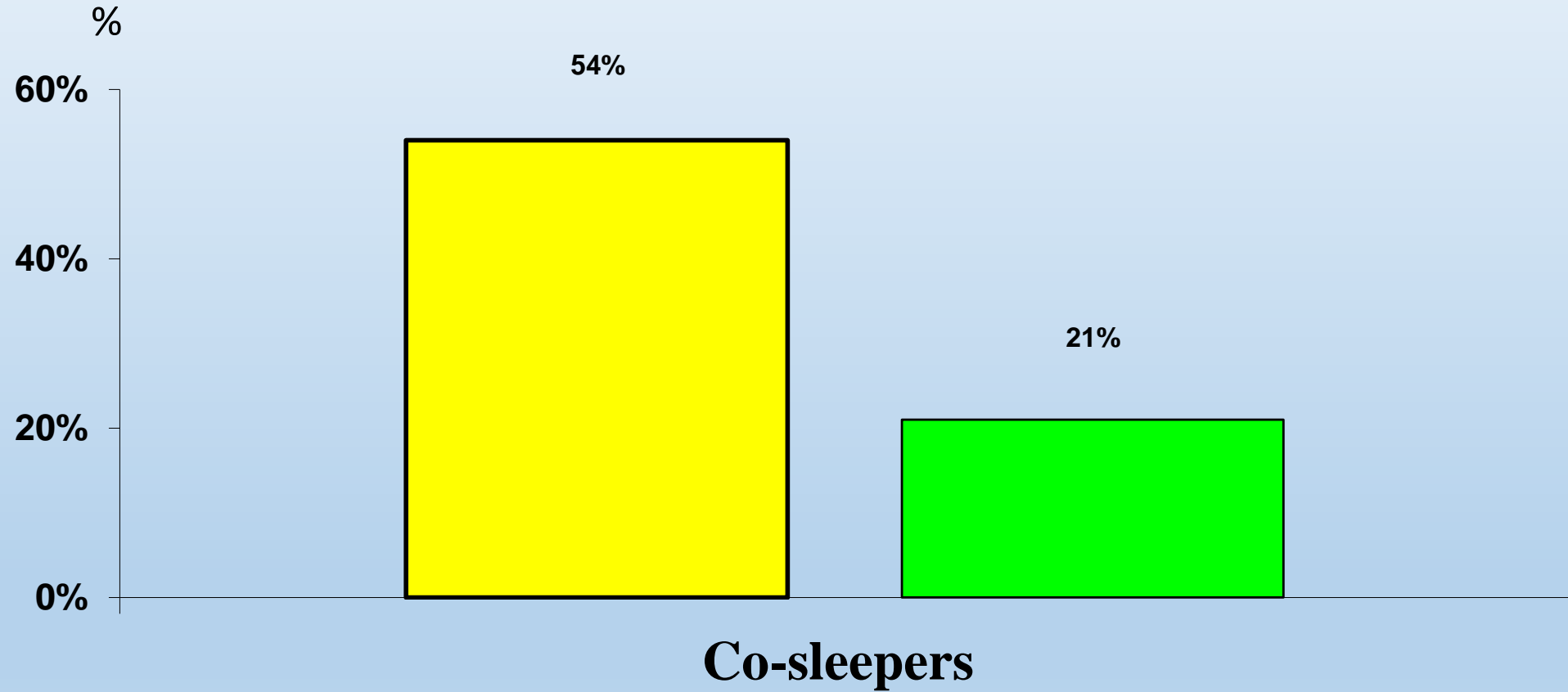
Source : Avon Longitudinal Study

# *South West Infant Sleep Scene Study*

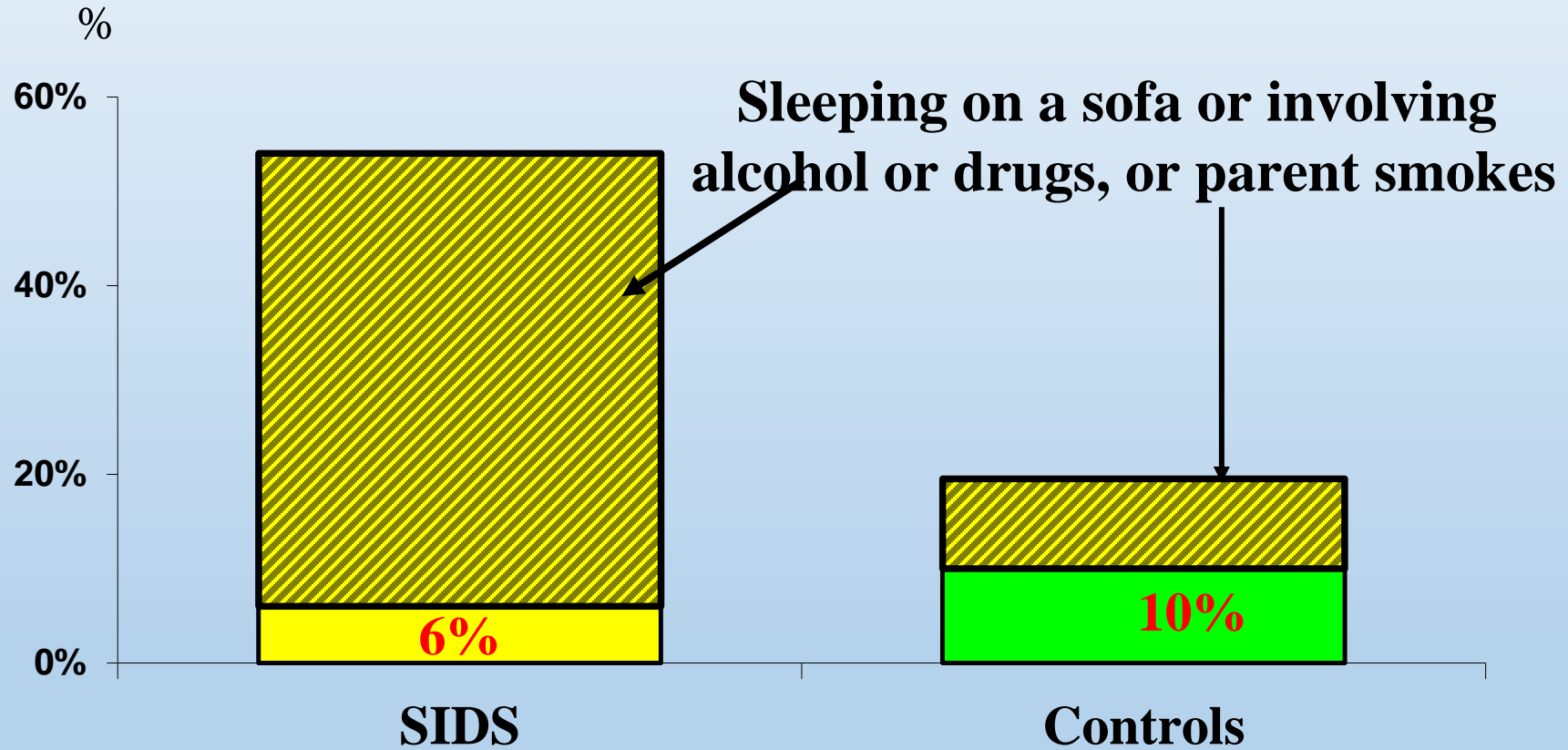


- 2003-2006
- 80 SIDS & 87 Random Controls
- Population 5 million
- 180,000 births

# Co-sleeping in the UK SWISS study (2003-2006)



## Co-sleeping in the SWISS study



# Bedsharing and the risk of unexpected infant death

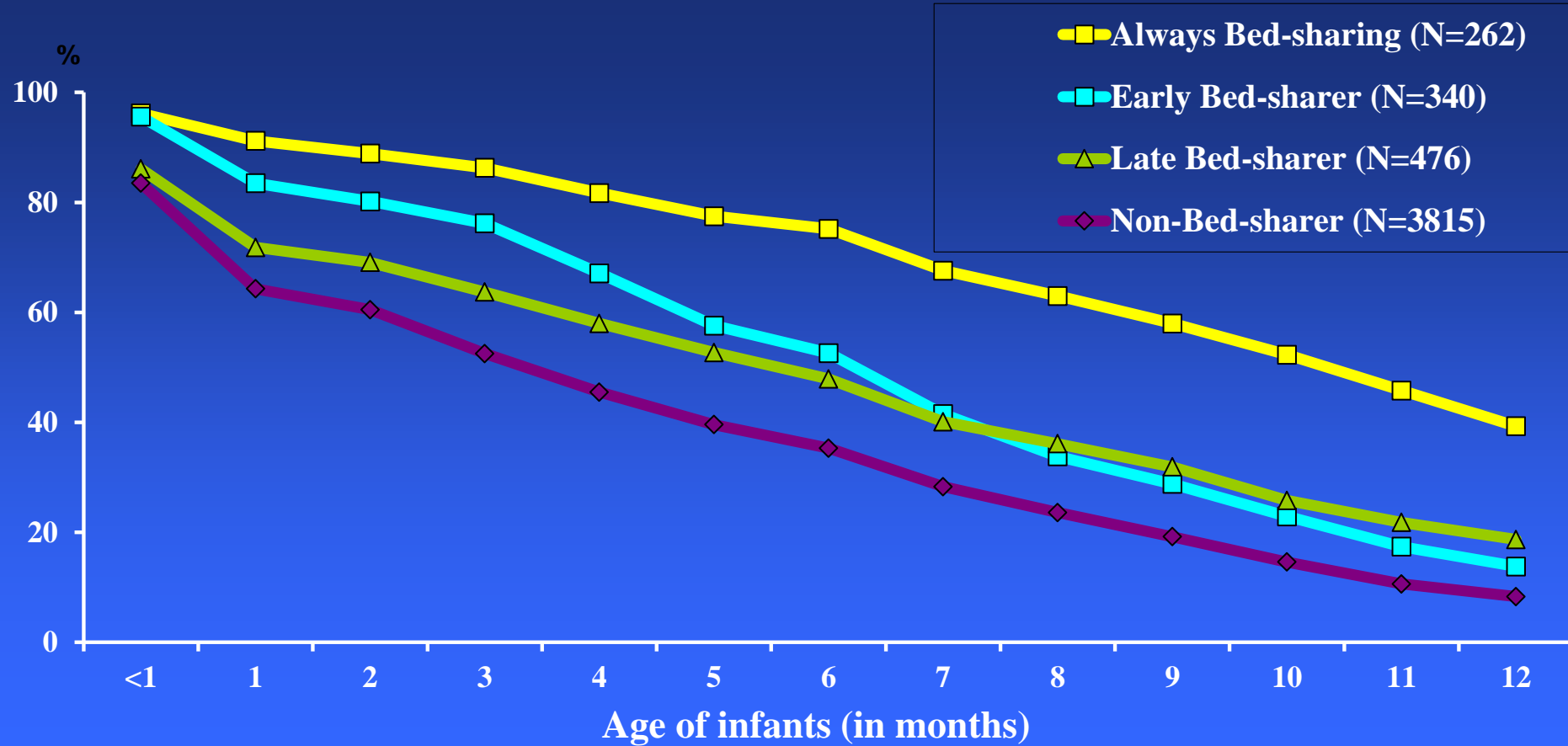
- Bedsharing with an adult who smokes, has been drinking alcohol or taking recreational drugs carries a high risk
- Bedsharing on a sofa or armchair carries a high risk
- The risk is higher for infants born prematurely or of low birthweight
- **Bedsharing with a breastfeeding mother with none of the above risk factors has NOT been shown to be a significant hazard in any study where these data have been collected.**

*Blair, Sidebotham Pease and Fleming PLOS ONE 2014;9: e107799.*

**Bedsharing and breastfeeding –**

**What is the relationship?**

# Prevalence of breastfeeding over 12 months amongst different bed-sharing groups



Blair PS, Heron J, Fleming PJ. Pediatrics 2010



# NICE\* Guidance 2021

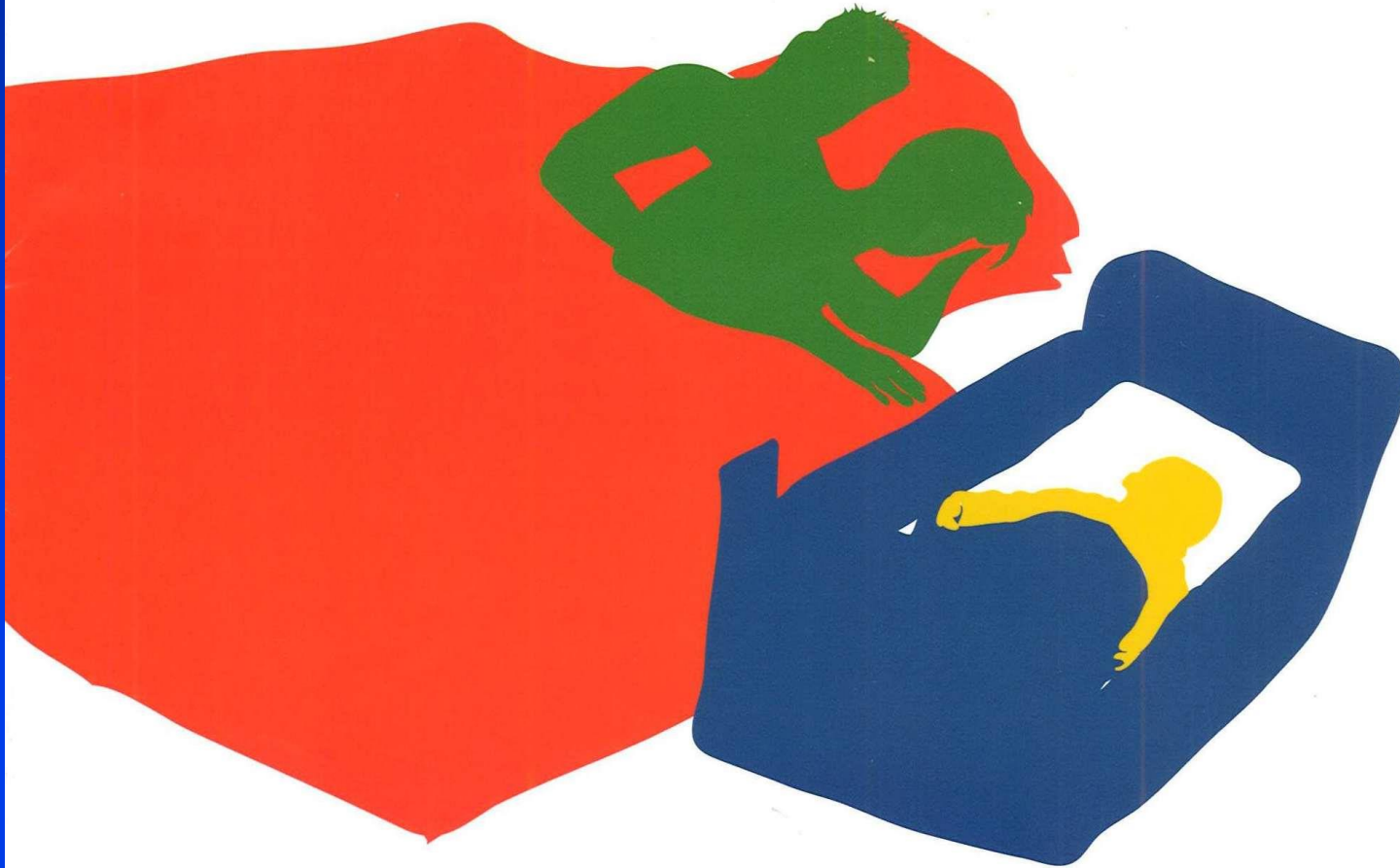
*“The committee agreed that on the basis of the evidence presented, which showed no greater risk of harm when parents shared a bed with their baby compared to not bed sharing, healthcare professionals should not routinely advise parents against sharing a bed with their baby. They agreed about the importance of parental choice in relation to bed sharing with their baby assuming they follow safe practices for bed sharing”.*

\*National Institute for health and Care Excellence.

<https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng194/evidence/m-benefits-and-harms-of-bed-sharing-pdf-326764485977>

# Caring for your baby at night

## A guide for parents



BABY FRIENDLY INITIATIVE

unicef 



*The Royal College of*  
Midwives

**fsid**  
The cot death charity

# BED-SHARING

Some parents choose to sleep with their baby in bed and some fall asleep with their baby during the night while feeding and comforting whether they intend to or not. Therefore it is very important to consider the following points.

## If you decide to share a bed with your baby:

- Keep your baby away from the pillows
- Make sure your baby cannot fall out of bed or become trapped between the mattress and wall
- Make sure the bedclothes cannot cover your baby's face
- Don't leave your baby alone in the bed, as even very young babies can wriggle into a dangerous position
- It is not safe to bed-share in the early months if your baby was born very small or pre-term

# WARNING

- The safest place for your baby to sleep is in a cot by the side of your bed
- Do not sleep with your baby when you have been drinking any alcohol or taking drugs (legal or illegal)
- Do not sleep with your baby if you or anyone else in the bed is a smoker
- Do not put yourself in the position where you could doze off with your baby on a sofa or armchair

Download the leaflet and health professional guide to this leaflet at

[www.unicef.org.uk/caringatnight](http://www.unicef.org.uk/caringatnight)

# SUDIC Working Group

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Membership includes paediatricians, cardiologist, pathologist, Professor in infectious diseases, Coroner's Society

Review notification details of relevant cases where the death is likely to be causally related to COVID-19

Make recommendations on further investigation / changes in practice

Provide advice / information via NCMD and NHS England to clinicians/service providers about findings from NCMD data on unexpected child deaths

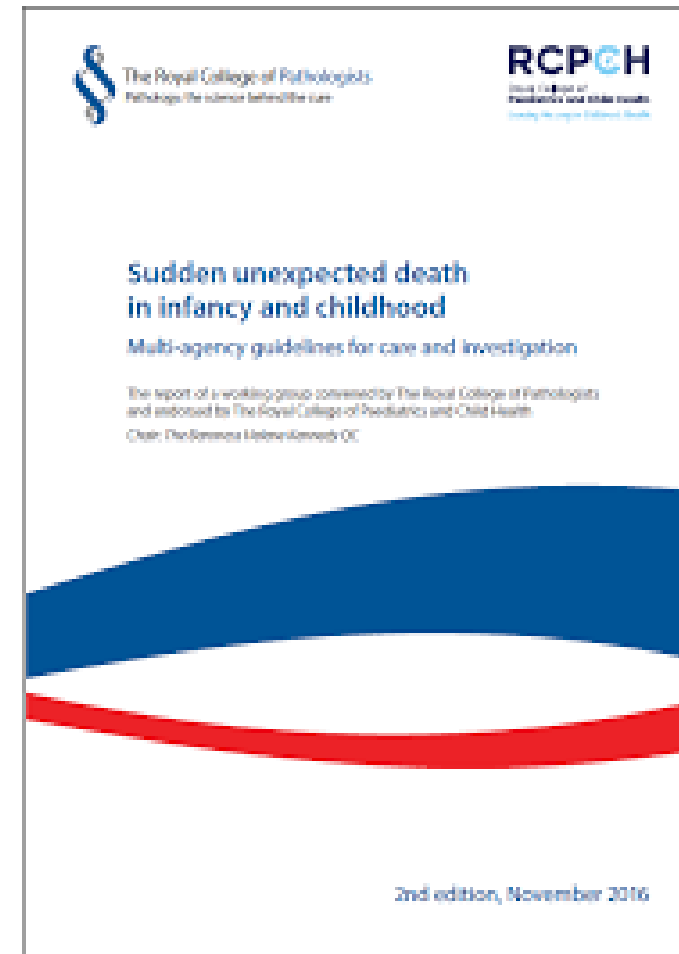


# Revised JAR Protocol

National working group convened to revise JAR protocol in light of the pandemic

The adapted guidance aims to ensure the health and well-being of JAR professionals and the potential reduction in capacity of staff to conduct a full JAR

For full details of the revised JAR protocol  
<https://www.ncmd.info/2020/04/07/jar-covid-19/>



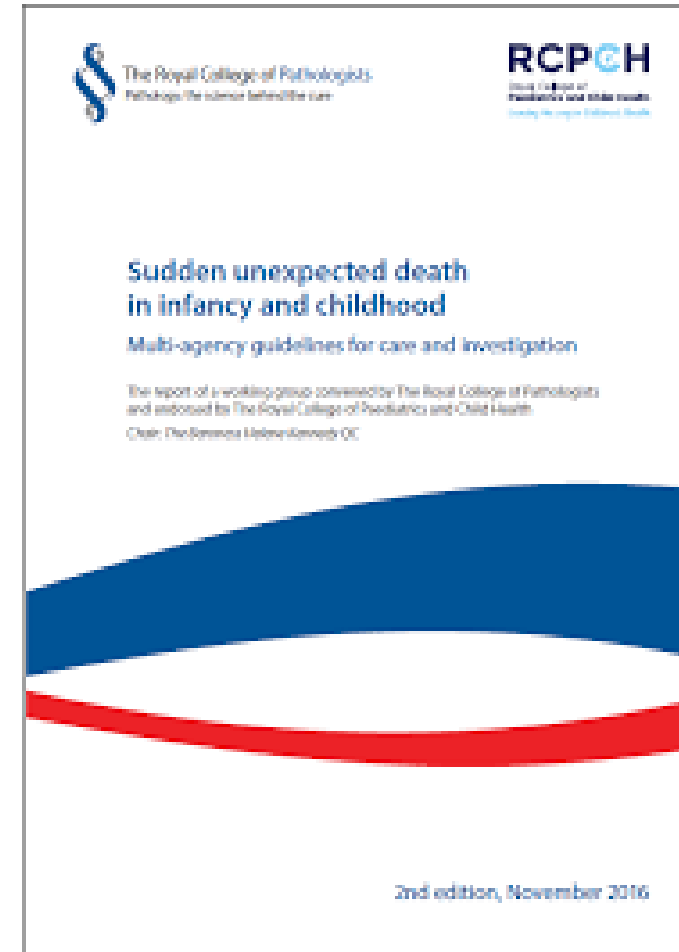


# Review of Unexpected Childhood Deaths 2019-2021

Detailed review of all unexpected deaths in England April 2019 – March 2021 inclusive

Linking all data sources including:  
NHS digital, ONS, Hospital Records, Pathology, Badgernet, Maternity records

1. Under 1 year,
2. 1-4 years
3. 5-9 years
4. 10-17 years





**Thank you.  
Any Questions?**