

**PARENT INFORMATION ON PARENT AND INFANT SLEEP: TRIAL OF A SLEEP INTERVENTION FOR FIRST TIME MOTHERS IN EARLY POSTPARTUM**

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**Introduction:** Alterations in usual sleep are universal among peripartum women. Prospective mothers receive little information about realistic sleep patterns or strategies for coping. Further, minimal evidence-based information is available on coping with and promoting infant sleep in the early postpartum. The aim of this study was to trial a behavioural-educational intervention to promote maternal and infant sleep in the first three months. Results for maternal sleep at six weeks are reported.

**Methods:** Forty primiparous women were assigned to either an intervention or control group. Intervention participants attended a 2-hour prenatal sleep education session, and received weekly postnatal support phone calls during weeks 1-6. Control participants attended a 1-hour prenatal general information session and received two contact-only phone calls in weeks 1-6. All mothers and babies completed 48-hours of actigraphy, sleep diaries and questionnaires at 6 and 12-weeks postpartum. Questionnaires pertaining to sleep, health, mood and psychosocial factors were completed at 35-37 weeks gestation and 12-weeks postpartum. Intervention group mothers received a comprehensive information booklet.

**Results:** At 6-weeks postpartum there was a trend for mothers in the intervention group for less total sleep time in 24-hours than control group mothers by 17 minutes ( $p = .26$ ). However, intervention group mothers' mean longest sleep episodes were 16 minutes greater ( $p = .26$ ). Using the General Sleep Disturbance Scale, 37% of control mothers were classified as poor sleepers compared to 16% of intervention mothers. The impact of sleepiness on daytime function was also greater in control mothers (30% compared to 20% in intervention group). Intervention group mothers reported higher levels of confidence in understanding and managing infant sleep, especially in relation to recognising infant cues and tired signs ( $t(32)=-2.29, p<.03$ ).

**Conclusion:** Although most differences did not reach statistical significance, mothers in the intervention group had longer episodes of sleep and were more confident in managing their infants sleep. These strategies warrant further investigation in a larger sample.

<http://www.journalsleep.org/Resources/Documents/2012abstractsupplement.pdf>