

# Co-sleeping: facts and figures.

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# Presentation – outline

## RASCALS

Method

Data

- Co-sleeping
- Sleep position
- Sleeping place

- WA Mortality Data base

Method

Data

- Co-sleeping

- Key messages

# RASCALS

Randomly Ascertained Sample of  
Children in Australia's Largest  
State

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in collaboration with V Dawes (DOH) ; P Plant (Curtin)

# Method - data source

- Randomly ascertained sample of all Western Australian mothers – 10%
- Initiated in 1995 , self completion survey
- Response rate 82%
- Sample base was followed up annually
- Study completed in 2005
- Key longitudinal Australian studies

## Method - data

- 1995 (n=2067) and 1996 (n=2009) data represented 8% of total number of WA births in these years
  - Aboriginal births (n=55) only 1% of sample (compared with 6% of all WA births)
- 1997 data (n=854) represented 3% of all WA births
  - data only collected to June 1997
  - Aboriginal births (n=21) only 2% of sample
- Note: RASCALS maternal and perinatal values similar to those in total population data

# **DATA - RASCALS**

Co-sleeping

# Co-sleeping – 1995, 1996, 1997

Usually sleep with in past 2 weeks?	1995/1996		1997	
	N	(%)	N	(%)
Slept alone	3347	(82)	705	(83)
Mum&/or partner (1)	338	( 8)	82	(10)
Bro/s &/or sister/s(2)	32	(0.8)	1	(0.1)
(1) &/or (2)	25	(0.6)	10	( 1)
<b>Slept alone &amp;/or (1)</b>	<b>310</b>	<b>( 8)</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>( 5)</b>
Other	7	(0.1)	3	(0.1)
<b>TOTAL*</b>	<b>4076</b>	<b>(100)</b>	<b>854</b>	<b>(100)</b>

# Co-sleeping – 1995, 1996 Aboriginal compared with non-Aboriginal

Usually sleep with in past 2 weeks?	Aboriginal		Non-Aboriginal	
	N	(%)	N	(%)
<b>Slept alone</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>(35)</b>	<b>3328</b>	<b>(83)</b>
<b>Mum&amp;/or partner (1)</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>(51)</b>	<b>310</b>	<b>( 8)</b>
<b>Bro/s &amp;/or sister/s(2)</b>	0	( 0)	32	( 1)
<b>(1) &amp;/or (2)</b>	1	( 2)	24	( 1)
<b>Slept alone &amp;/or (1)</b>	5	( 9)	305	( 8)
<b>Other</b>	0	( 0)	7	(<1)
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>(100)</b>	<b>4021</b>	<b>(100)</b>

# Co-sleeping – 1997 Aboriginal compared with non-Aboriginal

Usually sleep with in past 2 weeks?	Aboriginal		Non-Aboriginal	
	N	(%)	N	(%)
<b>Slept alone</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>(43)</b>	<b>696</b>	<b>(84)</b>
<b>Mum&amp;/or partner (1)</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>(33)</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>( 9)</b>
<b>Bro/s &amp;/or sister/s(2)</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>( 0)</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>(&lt;1)</b>
<b>(1) &amp;/or (2)</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>( 0)</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>( 1)</b>
<b>Slept alone &amp;/or (1)</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>(19)</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>( 5)</b>
<b>Other</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>( 0)</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>(&lt;1)</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>(100)</b>	<b>833</b>	<b>(100)</b>

# **DATA - RASCALS**

Sleep position

# Sleep position – 1995, 1996, 1997

Usual sleep position last 2 weeks?	1995/1996		1997	
	N	(%)	N	(%)
<b>Back</b>	1200	(29)	258	(30)
<b>Side</b>	<b>2024</b>	<b>(50)</b>	<b>274</b>	<b>(32)</b>
<b>Tummy</b>	<b>408</b>	<b>(10)</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>( 6)</b>
<b>On back or side</b>	<b>329</b>	<b>( 8)</b>	<b>223</b>	<b>(26)</b>
<b>On back or tummy</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>(&lt;1)</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>( 1)</b>
<b>On side or tummy</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>( 1)</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>( 2)</b>
<b>On back/side/tummy</b>	28	( 1)	21	( 2)

# Sleep position – 1995, 1996 Aboriginal compared with non-Aboriginal

Usual sleep position last 2 weeks?	Aboriginal		Non-Aboriginal	
	N	(%)	N	(%)
<b>Back</b>	11	(20)	1189	(30)
<b>Side</b>	23	(42)	2001	(50)
<b>Tummy</b>	4	(7)	404	(10)
<b>On back or side</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>(27)</b>	<b>314</b>	<b>(9)</b>
<b>On back or tummy</b>	1	(2)	19	(<1)
<b>On side or tummy</b>	0	(0)	51	(1)
<b>On back/side/tummy</b>	1	(2)	27	(1)

# Sleep position – 1997 Aboriginal compared with non-Aboriginal

Usual sleep position last 2 weeks?	Aboriginal		Non-Aboriginal	
	N	(%)	N	(%)
<b>Back</b>	7	(33)	251	(30)
<b>Side</b>	6	(29)	268	(32)
<b>Tummy</b>	0	( 0)	48	( 6)
<b>On back or side</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>(24)</b>	<b>218</b>	<b>(26)</b>
<b>On back or tummy</b>	1	( 5)	8	( 1)
<b>On side or tummy</b>	0	( 0)	19	( 2)
<b>On back/side/tummy</b>	2	( 9)	19	( 2)

# **DATA - RASCALS**

Sleeping place

# Sleeping place– 1995, 1996, 1997

Usual sleeping place last 2 weeks?	1995/1996		1997	
	N	(%)	N	(%)
<b>Bed</b>	298	( 7)	60	( 7)
<b>Cot</b>	1747	(43)	357	(42)
<b>Bassinet</b>	<b>1416</b>	<b>(35)</b>	<b>356</b>	<b>(42)</b>
<b>Pram</b>	126	( 3)	27	( 3)
<b>In bed or cot</b>	<b>160</b>	<b>( 4)</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>( 1)</b>
<b>Other</b>	329	( 8)	48	( 6)
<b>TOTAL</b>	4076	(100)	854	(100)

# Sleeping place – 1995/96 Aboriginal compared with non-Aboriginal

Usual sleeping place last 2 weeks?	Aboriginal		Non-Aboriginal	
	N	(%)	N	(%)
<b>Bed</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>(45)</b>	<b>273</b>	<b>( 7)</b>
<b>Cot</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>(20)</b>	<b>1747</b>	<b>(43)</b>
<b>Bassinet</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>(11)</b>	<b>1410</b>	<b>(35)</b>
<b>Pram</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>( 4)</b>	<b>124</b>	<b>( 3)</b>
<b>In bed or cot</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>( 0)</b>	<b>160</b>	<b>( 4)</b>
<b>Other</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>(20)</b>	<b>289</b>	<b>( 7)</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>(100)</b>	<b>4021</b>	<b>(100)</b>

# Sleeping place – 1997 Aboriginal compared with non-Aboriginal

Usual sleeping place last 2 weeks?	Aboriginal		Non-Aboriginal	
	N	(%)	N	(%)
<b>Bed</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>(29)</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>( 6)</b>
<b>Cot</b>	9	(43)	348	(42)
<b>Bassinet</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>(19)</b>	<b>352</b>	<b>(42)</b>
<b>Pram</b>	0	( 0)	27	( 3)
<b>In bed or cot</b>	2	( 9)	2	( 1)
<b>Other</b>	0	( 0)	48	( 6)
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>(100)</b>	<b>833</b>	<b>(100)</b>

**Western Australian Mortality  
Database: infants, children and  
young people**

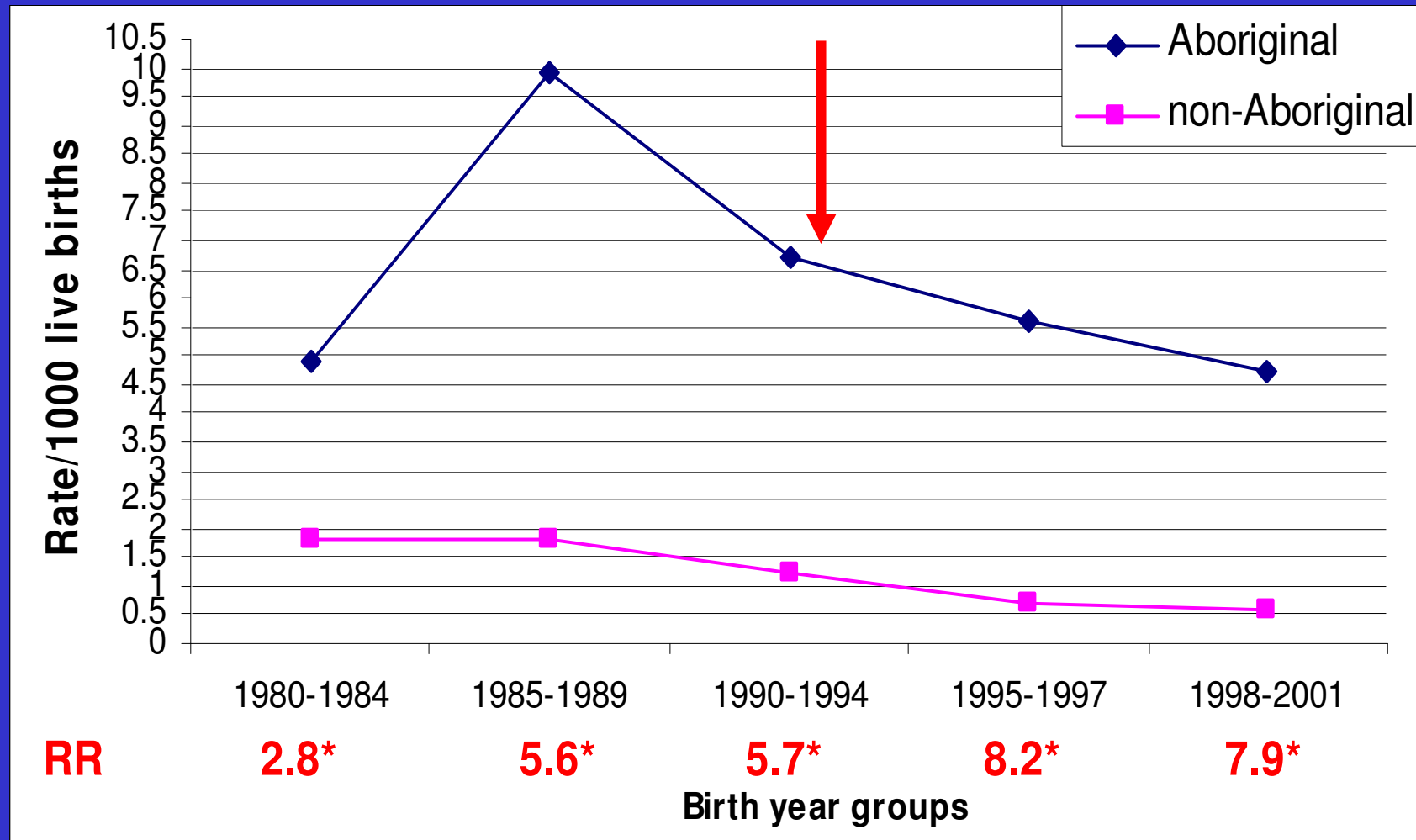
## Method - data source

- Data derived from the Maternal and Child Health Research Data Base (MCHRDB).
- MCHRDB is a TOTAL POPULATION database based on a composite birth record & linkages to various statutory and administrative data sets, surveys & census information.

## Method - data

- **Data set included all live births that occurred in Western Australia between 1980-2001 (inclusive) and deaths that occurred before 2003 = 531209 live births, 3713 infant and 1535 childhood deaths.**

# SIDS+unascertainable deaths by Aboriginal status and birth year groups, WA births 1980-2001 inclusive



# **Data - WA Mortality Database**

Co-sleeping

# Percentage of infant deaths according to co-sleeping, 1998-2002

	Aboriginal				Non-Aboriginal			
	Yes %	No %	N/S* %	Total number	Yes %	No %	N/S* %	Total number
<b>Birth Defects</b>	0	0	100	<b>16</b>	1	0	99	<b>86</b>
<b>Infection</b>	39	4	58	<b>26</b>	7	9	84	<b>43</b>
<b>SIDS</b>	50	13	37	<b>16</b>	31	58	11	<b>36</b>
<b>Unascertain.</b>	79	0	21	<b>14</b>	36	18	46	<b>22</b>
<b>Premature</b>	0	0	100	<b>22</b>	0	0	100	<b>89</b>
<b>Other</b>	13	0	87	<b>8</b>	1	6	93	<b>71</b>

\* NS = not stated

# Co-sleeping in RASCALS and co-sleeping among infant deaths

	Aboriginal		Non-Aboriginal	
	%	(N=)	%	(N=)
<b>RASCALS</b>				
<b>1995/6</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>(34)</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>(678)</b>
<b>1997</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>(11)</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>(131)</b>
<b>Deaths 98-01</b>				
<b>SIDS</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>( 8)</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>( 11)</b>
<b>Infection</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>(10)</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>( 3)</b>
<b>other</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>( 1)</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>( 1)</b>

# **Key findings**

## **Key findings – co-sleeping**

- The proportion of babies sleeping ‘alone or with parents’ was less in 1997 compared with 1995/96
- Compared with non-Aboriginal babies, the proportion of Aboriginal babies sleeping alone was less and the proportion sleeping with Mum and/or partner was higher, in RASCALS sample

# Key findings – Sleep position

- Significant changes in sleeping positions observed in RASCALS between 1995 and 1997
  - Less tummy sleeping
  - More back and side sleeping
- Different sleep positions in the two populations in RASCALS
  - Aboriginal babies significantly more likely to sleep on back or side compared with non-Aboriginal babies (1995/96)

# Key findings – Sleeping place

- Different sleep places observed in the two populations in RASCALS
  - Proportion of babies sleeping in bassinets increased in 1997
  - Aboriginal babies less likely to sleep in cots and bassinets and more likely to sleep in beds

# Key findings – co-sleeping

- There was a higher proportion of co-sleeping among infants who died in both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal population compared with the sample (live) population.
- **Co-sleeping IS NOT a cause of death.**  
**However, infants sharing sleep surfaces increases the risk of infant death due to overlaying and other factors.**

# **Key findings - recommendation**

**If we are to truly determine the association of co-sleeping and increased risk of infant death, then we must determine the prevalence and characteristics of co-sleeping in the whole population.**

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