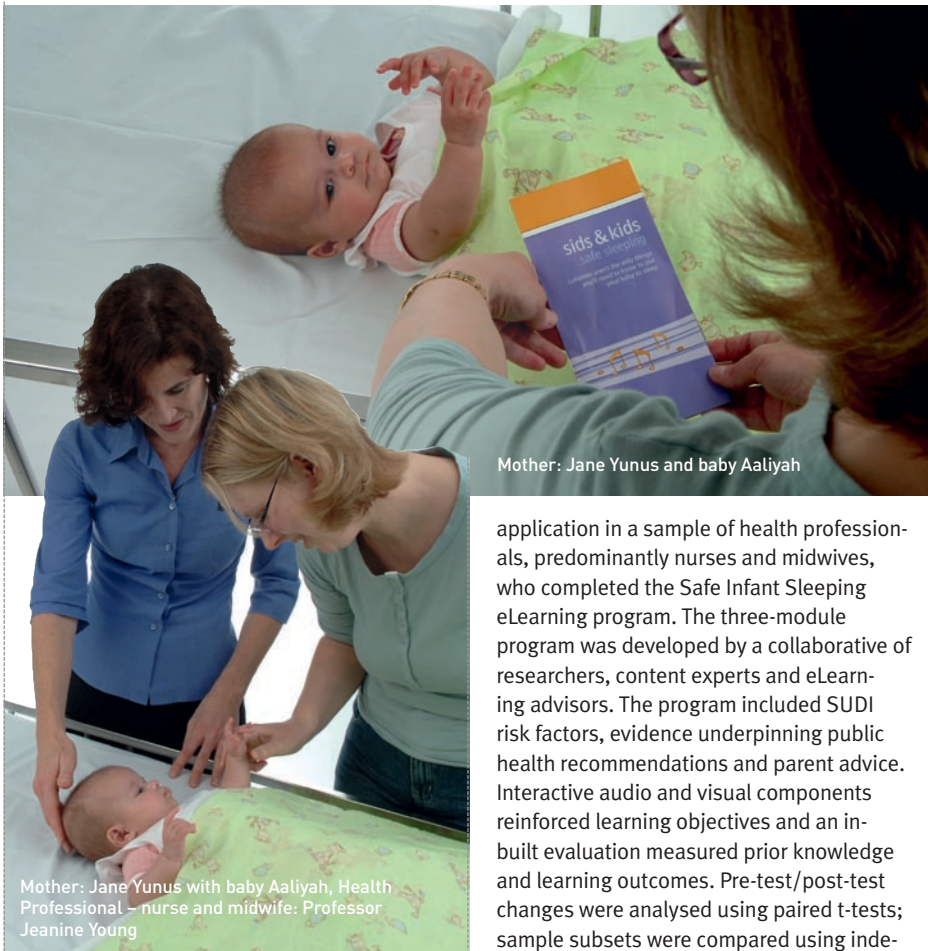


Supporting nurses and midwives to promote a Safe Infant Sleeping eLearning Program



Mother: Jane Yunus and baby Aaliyah

Mother: Jane Yunus with baby Aaliyah, Health Professional – nurse and midwife: Professor Jeanine Young

BY **JEANINE YOUNG, NIALL HIGGINS, LEANNE RAVEN AND MARCUS WATSON**

Nurses and midwives have a key role in supporting public health safe sleeping recommendations demonstrated to reduce Sudden Unexpected Deaths in Infancy (SUDI) through role modelling in clinical practice and in parent education (Bullock et al 2004; Burrell and Stairs 2012). The aim of this study was to evaluate the reach, sustainability and effectiveness of an evidence based eLearning program in positively impacting knowledge and knowledge application relating to sudden infant death and safe sleeping recommendations.

Methods

A pre-test/post-test design was used to evaluate changes in knowledge and knowledge

application in a sample of health professionals, predominantly nurses and midwives, who completed the Safe Infant Sleeping eLearning program. The three-module program was developed by a collaborative of researchers, content experts and eLearning advisors. The program included SUDI risk factors, evidence underpinning public health recommendations and parent advice. Interactive audio and visual components reinforced learning objectives and an in-built evaluation measured prior knowledge and learning outcomes. Pre-test/post-test changes were analysed using paired t-tests; sample subsets were compared using independent t-tests.

Results

During the first 2.5 years in operation (June 2010-December 2012) the program attracted 5,280 registrations with 2,244 completions. The program targeted Queensland Health professionals however attracted attention from other states and overseas. Participants were predominantly nurses and midwives (n=2,051) however included allied health, medical, student, parent, child health worker, Indigenous Health worker and *SIDS and Kids* employees. Pre-test results (n=2,244) identified deficits in knowledge and application to risk factor assessment and evidence based parent advice. Participant scores significantly increased post-test [pre-test 69.5% vs post-test average 87%, p<0.0001]. Public

sector staff scores were significantly higher pre-test than the private sector (69.9% vs 64%, p<0.0001), however post-test scores for both sectors were similar (86.7% vs 87.4%, p=0.2). Nurses and midwives scored higher than other professional groups pre-test; while post-test mean scores were similar between nurses and midwives and other health professionals (87% vs 87%, p=0.5).

Discussion

This innovative program was sustainable, effective and attractive to a broad health professional group. This eLearning program underpins the policy and implementation standards that relate to safe infant sleeping including co-sleeping and bedsharing practices in Queensland Health facilities (QLD Health QH-POL-362, QH-IMP-362-1, QH-IMP-362-2, 2012). Collaborative networking and information sharing were important factors in successful policy development and in subsequent development of consistent content within the educational intervention. The Safe Infant Sleeping eLearning program has become one of the most successful eLearning programs in the Clinical Skills Development Service program suite, endorsed by the Australian College of Midwives and Australian College of Nursing, (formerly RCNA). Consistent delivery of evidence based information relating to safe sleeping and linking key policy will support nurses and midwives in their role as parent educators about public health initiatives that promote infant health and reduce mortality.

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