

## Manuscript – Letter to the editor

### Title:

A reflection on the use of YouTube as a safe sleep promotion resource

Dear Editor,

The article “Safe Sleep Practices for Infants: Comprehensive Analysis of YouTube Videos” by Özçevik Subaşı et al. (2024) aimed to analyze the accuracy, quality and reliability of the content of videos on the YouTube platform about safe sleep for infants. The study used the recommendations made by the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), and the results found were highly relevant.

Sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS) is the leading cause of death in the first year of life (excluding the neonatal period) in developed countries and the leading cause of infant death worldwide (Maged & Rizzolo, 2018). In many countries there is no legal requirement to report SIDS and therefore the existing statistical data on its prevalence is not accurate (Fraile-Martinez et al., 2024). However, it is well known that the knowledge of both the population and health professionals is far from the desired level. A study conducted by Fernandes et al. (2020), which aimed to assess the knowledge of parents and health professionals regarding SIDS and its risk factors, described a lack of knowledge in both groups. According to this study, health professionals are not as well informed as they should be and have little confidence in discussing issues related to SIDS. Among parents, a significant proportion of the sample had never heard of SIDS, and of those who had, only 8.7% answered 75% of the questions about risk factors correctly.

These are data that require reflection and concern. As health professionals play a role in health promotion, they need to be informed and trained about safe sleep practices, the rationale behind them and the risks associated with non-advised practices. In addition, health professionals need to be equipped with effective communication strategies to reach the population. Communication has changed a lot in recent years, and health communication is no different.

Returning to the study by Fernandes et al. (2020), more than half of the parents surveyed said that their main source of information about SIDS was the internet, and only a smaller percentage said it was nurses, and an even smaller percentage said it was doctors.

The range of online platforms that can be used to share information is vast and varied. YouTube is one of the most popular platforms in the world. Its popularity, ease of access and social nature make it a powerful tool for influencing individual choices and promoting well-being. Its visual model contains theoretical and practical knowledge that can be used to teach, making it a very valuable educational resource (Osman et al., 2022). Given the nature of the practices that need to be taught, YouTube can even be a good resource, as it is possible to play video content simulating real-life scenarios that can be saved and replayed whenever parents need to review them.

However, it is the content that is delivered and how it meets AAP recommendations that is significant. To reduce the risk of sleep-related deaths, the AAP (Moon et al., 2022) has made recommendations on the sleep environment, including the baby's position, location and surface. However, it doesn't limit itself to the sleep environment and extends its recommendations in this area to other aspects of a baby's life, such as feeding, the use of a pacifier, 'tummy time', routine vaccinations and exposure to nicotine, alcohol, opioids and illicit drugs. It is vital that these preventative measures reach families and digital platforms, particularly YouTube, may play an active role in the dissemination of information. The study by Özçevik Subaşı et al. (2024) revealed important conclusions about the quality and reliability of YouTube video content on safe sleep. Despite high viewing rates, the videos were not of sufficient quality and reliability, with the most reliable content being provided by doctors and nurses. The authors therefore emphasize the need for greater caution when disseminating health information on digital platforms, and the solution could be a more active role for health professionals and institutions on digital platforms.

It is therefore important to reflect on these conclusions and to implement them. The ways in which information is disseminated have changed in recent years and it is important to keep up with these changes in order to provide effective health communication. Making health professionals aware of digital platforms, and YouTube in particular, as a way to promote health behaviors and practices, especially safe sleep practices, can have a real impact on the effectiveness of reaching parents. However, it is also important to emphasize the need to educate and empower parents to choose the digital content they trust, ideally choosing content produced by health professionals or institutions.

## References

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