Addendum: Distinguishing Sudden Infant Death Syndrome From Child Abuse Fatalities

ABBREVIATIONS. AAP, American Academy of Pediatrics; SIDS, sudden infant death syndrome; NAME, National Association of Medical Examiners.

In the February 2001 issue of Pediatrics (2001;107:437–441), the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) Committee on Child Abuse and Neglect issued an update of the AAP policy statement “Distinguishing Sudden Infant Death Syndrome From Child Abuse Fatalities.” This revised statement provides pediatricians with information and guidelines to avoid distressing or stigmatizing families of sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS) victims while allowing accumulation of appropriate evidence in potential cases of death by infanticide. The policy statement contains 10 specific recommendations for evaluation of sudden, unexpected infant deaths, including “examination of the dead infant at a hospital emergency department by a child maltreatment specialist.”

In response to this policy statement, the executive committee of the National Association of Medical Examiners (NAME) has pointed out that “medical examiners and coroners have the sole legal authority to investigate deaths that are sudden, unexpected, unexplained, and potentially due to external causes such as injury.” They went on to indicate that “examination or manipulation of the deceased body by child maltreatment experts without proper statutory authority or family permission may constitute a tort or be a violation of criminal law.”

On the basis of these valid concerns, this specific recommendation is hereby rescinded. In its place, the following recommendation should be inserted: “appropriate utilization of available medical specialists by medical examiners and coroners (eg, pediatrician, pediatric pathologist, radiologist, pediatric neuropathologist, etc).” NAME and the AAP Committee on Child Abuse and Neglect have agreed to collaborate on any future revisions of this policy statement.
Addendum: Distinguishing Sudden Infant Death Syndrome From Child Abuse Fatalities
Committee on Child Abuse and Neglect
*Pediatrics* 2001;108;812
DOI: 10.1542/peds.108.3.812

Updated Information & Services
including high resolution figures, can be found at:
/content/108/3/812.full.html

Citations
This article has been cited by 1 HighWire-hosted articles:
/content/108/3/812.full.html#related-urls

Subspecialty Collections
This article, along with others on similar topics, appears in the following collection(s):
Fetus/Newborn Infant
/cgi/collection/fetus:newborn_infant_sub
SIDS
/cgi/collection/sids_sub
Child Abuse and Neglect
/cgi/collection/child_abuse_neglect_sub

Permissions & Licensing
Information about reproducing this article in parts (figures, tables) or in its entirety can be found online at:
site/misc/Permissions.xhtml

Reprints
Information about ordering reprints can be found online:
site/misc/reprints.xhtml
Addendum: Distinguishing Sudden Infant Death Syndrome From Child Abuse Fatalities
Committee on Child Abuse and Neglect
*Pediatrics* 2001;108;812
DOI: 10.1542/peds.108.3.812

The online version of this article, along with updated information and services, is located on the World Wide Web at:
/content/108/3/812.full.html