



Cure Kids
PO Box 90 907
Victoria Street West
Auckland 1142
+64 9 370 0222
www.curekids.org.nz

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CURE KIDS RESEARCH REVEALS MOTHER'S SLEEPING POSITION MAY REDUCE RISK OF STILLBIRTH

**New Zealand has second highest rate of stillbirths in developed countries.
It is more than NZ's annual road toll!**

Cure Kids has funded first of its kind research which could revolutionise the prevention of stillbirth, bring hope to the hundreds of parents who have lost a baby, just when they expect to welcome a new life.

A report published today in the British Medical Journal shows that research led by New Zealand experts has shown that women who sleep on their left on their last night of pregnancy have a fifty percent lower risk of stillbirth than those who sleep on their right side or back.

It also shows that women who get up more frequently to go to the toilet during the night have a reduced risk of late stillbirth, compared to those who get up once or less during the night of pregnancy.

The study involved asking detailed questions to 155 women in Auckland who gave birth to a stillborn baby between July 2006 and June 2009 when they were at least 28 weeks pregnant, compared to a control group of 310 women with ongoing pregnancies.

New Zealand researchers say findings will be important at a population level and have called for further research on the impact of restricted blood flow to the baby when the mother lies on her back or right for long periods to help explain this link.

Professor Lesley McCowan from Auckland University's Obstetrics and Gynaecology Department said smoking and obesity are the biggest risk factors involved with stillbirth. However almost a third of stillbirths are unexplained.

"Late stillbirth is 10 times more common than cot death, and yet there has been very little research money available to investigate the problem until Cure Kids funded this recent study," McCowan said.

Cure Kids Professor of Child Health Research Ed Mitchell who led the world-first advances into the risk of cot death and its prevention was one of the senior investigators in the Auckland Stillbirth Study. Vicki Lee, chief executive of Cure Kids, says Cure Kids will continue to fund research to help investigate how a mother's sleep position can reduce stillbirth.

"Obviously confirmatory studies are needed before public health recommendations can be made, but this is potentially so important, that confirmatory studies are needed immediately," says Lee.

Cure Kids was established over 35 years ago to address the lack of research into life-threatening childhood illnesses in New Zealand and has invested over twenty-six million dollars in vital medical research to improve the quality of life for thousands of children and save lives.

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For further information contact

Vicki Lee
Chief Executive
Cure Kids
+64 9 370 0222 or 021 898 903

Research: Association between maternal sleep practices and risk of late stillbirth: a case-control study

Authors: Tomasina Stacey, PhD Student (University of Auckland), Prof Lesley McGowan, Professor and Head of Department of Obstetrics and Gynaecology (University of Auckland), Prof Ed Mitchell, Professor of Child Health, Department of Paediatrics (University of Auckland).
<http://www.bmj.com/cgi/doi/10.1136/bmj.d3403>

About Cure Kids

Cure Kids was established over 35 years ago to address the lack of research into life-threatening childhood illnesses in New Zealand. During that time they have invested over \$26 million in vital medical research. This research has helped save many young lives and improved the quality of life for thousands of children. Over the years Cure Kids has funded research advancements in diseases such as childhood Leukaemia, Long QT Syndrome, Cystic Fibrosis, cot death, genetic research, and severe asthma. Today, we are more committed than ever to help find answers to the many cruel, life-threatening illnesses that devastate the lives of young children and their families.

NZ Stillbirth statistics

In 2008 Stillbirths=379, a rate of 5.8/1000 or 1 in 172 (from PMMRC 2008 report). In our Auckland study the rate of late stillbirth (after 28 weeks gestation) was 3.09/1000 which is 1 in 324, which is equivalent to 203 over the whole of New Zealand

NZ Road Death statistics

309 people died on New Zealand roads in the last 12 months (12 months to Friday 10 June 2011).
<http://www.nzta.govt.nz/resources/road-deaths/toll.html>