

# Pandemic affects family sleep

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The onset of COVID-19 disrupted day-to-day routines for millions of families around the world, with the stress and changes in routines caused by home confinement temporarily impeding normal infant sleep development, experts say.

However, studies led by Flinders University child sleep researchers also

found that shutdowns and working from [home](#) have presented an opportunity for [parents](#) to get more sleep for themselves and their [infants](#)

Parents of young children are a vulnerable population, having to juggle caring for their children's needs with working from home, Flinders University child and adolescent sleep researcher Dr. Michal Kahn told the 2020 European Sleep Congress.

Based on high-tech baby monitoring, developed by US company Nanit, the study of more than 600 [babies](#) aged 1-30 months formed the basis of this new study.

"We know that the pandemic has disrupted day-to-day routines as well as the health and wellbeing of families across the world, but what we found in our research helps demonstrate the resilience of infants and gives us hope that babies can adapt with the current uncertainty," says Nanit's clinical research director Dr. Natalie Barnett.

The study showed more fragmentation and wakefulness in baby behavior at the outset of the pandemic from mid-March to mid-May.

The silver lining, according to Dr. Kahn, was infants of mothers in home confinement also slept for longer durations, compared to infants of mothers who continued to work as usual.

"Shutdowns and working from home are now presenting an opportunity for parents to get more sleep for themselves and their infants, and the importance of getting more sleep in this day and age should not be underestimated," she says.

In a second study, Flinders and Nanit researchers collected data from 946 parents with babies aged two weeks to 18 months to observe parents' attitudes to infant sleep patterns.

This study found that the most potent predictor of perceived infant sleep problems is more connected to parental, rather than infant, behavior.

Provided by Flinders University

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