

Background

An infant's death is termed a SUDI where there is no known pre-existing condition which would make the death predictable. The causes of death are unknown (or unascertained), and therefore defined as SUDIs until more information is available.

SUDIs account for the largest number of infant deaths in those aged 2-6 months. There is a reduction in incidence beyond 12 months, with only a few cases per year in Scotland between 12-24 months.

After the SUDI review

At the review, it is agreed who will give feedback to the family. This is usually the person who is in closest contact with the family but may be the SUDI Paediatrician if none of the professionals present has ongoing contact with the parents.

The SUDI review summary sheet should be added to the mother's and father's primary care records. This ensures appropriate care of the next infant and that support is available when required at future appointments.

Information

Since the cause of death is not known, a death certificate cannot be issued and the death is not able to be registered. All SUDIs are reported to the Procurator Fiscal, on whose behalf Police Scotland will act. Police Scotland will automatically be informed of the death by the Scottish Ambulance Service or Emergency Department. Investigations, which include a post-mortem examination may take several months.

In some cases a cause of death may be found during post-mortem examination, but for many the post-mortem examination will not explain the death.

GP's role

GPs may be relied upon by the family not only during the initial stages of a SUDI, but also for years after in offering ongoing support and planning for any further pregnancies.

Sudden Unexpected Death in Infancy (SUDI) process

SUDI Review

Approximately 9-12 months after the death, the post mortem is sent to the SUDI Paediatrician by the Procurator Fiscal and a SUDI review may proceed.

HIS will contact the SUDI Paediatrician to advise them that a SUDI review can take place, you will be copied into this notification.

The SUDI Paediatrician will invite you to attend the SUDI review. This is a multidisciplinary case discussion to look at all aspects of the death, including possible causes or contributing factors to see what lessons can be learned and to plan support for the family.

Healthcare Improvement Scotland (HIS) aims to provide information and support resources to professionals involved in SUDI to enable them to better support bereaved families.

The [Healthcare Improvement Scotland](#) website offers information on the investigation process.

Once HIS is informed of a SUDI, we will contact you and send you information about the resources available to you.

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