

# Sudden Unexpected Infant Death

## Data Brief

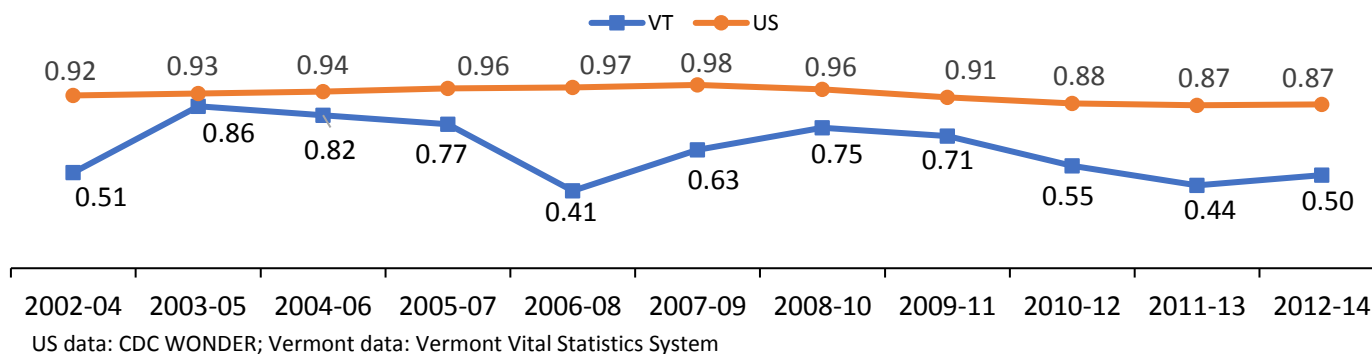
### Background

Sudden Unexpected Infant Death (SUID) is the death of an infant less than 1 year of age that occurs suddenly and unexpectedly, and whose cause of death is not immediately obvious before investigation<sup>1</sup>. After investigation, SUID deaths may be determined to be of natural causes, accidental (often suffocation and strangulation related to sleep environment), homicidal, or of unknown cause<sup>2</sup>. This data brief describes SUID classified as either Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS), undetermined cause or accidental suffocation and strangulation in the sleep environment among Vermont residents. SIDS is a descriptive term used for the sudden death of an infant less than 1 year of age that cannot be explained after a thorough investigation is conducted, including a complete autopsy, examination of the death scene, and a review of the clinical history. In Vermont, these deaths are most often certified as undetermined cause. SIDS and undetermined deaths are grouped here in the unknown category. Accidental suffocation and strangulation in the sleep environment is the sudden death of an infant less than 1 year of age that can happen because of suffocation by soft bedding, overlay, wedging or entrapment, etc.

### SUID Trend

In 2012-2014, the average number of SUID deaths was three per year in Vermont. This is a rate of .50 per 100,000 live births, which is lower than the U.S. rate of .87 per 100,000 live births. From 2002 to 2014, the rate of SUID deaths was consistently lower in Vermont than the U.S. During this time, SUID deaths among Vermont residents fluctuated from a high of .86 in 2003-2005 to .50 deaths per 100,000 live births in 2012-2014, while the U.S. rate decreased from .93 to .87 SUID deaths per 100,000 live births during the same time periods. The decrease for the U.S. was statistically significant, however, the VT decrease was not statistically significant\*.

**SUID Deaths among Vermont Residents**  
**Rate per 1,000 Live Births, 2000-2014**



### SUID by cause

From 2010-2014, there were 16 SUID deaths, half were due to accidental suffocation or strangulation in bed (8 deaths), about half were classified as SIDS or unknown cause (8).

For more information on safe sleep practices please visit: <http://healthvermont.gov/children-youth-families/infants-young-children/safe-sleep>

For more information on injury deaths, please contact Leslie Barnard, MPH, [leslie.barnard@vermont.gov](mailto:leslie.barnard@vermont.gov).

<sup>1</sup> About SUID and SIDS. CDC. <https://www.cdc.gov/sids/aboutsuidandsids.htm>

<sup>2</sup> Natural deaths, accidents unrelated to sleep environment, and homicides are not included in the count of SUID cases.

\*The average number of SUID deaths in VT/year is small (~4), as a result, statistical precision is weak making it difficult to detect differences in trend. In contrast, the average SUID deaths in U.S. for the same time period is much larger (~3,778), therefore increasing statistical precision.