

Infant Security News

Dedicated to Preventing Infant Abductions & Mother / Baby Mix-ups

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“Infant Security News” is SAI’s quarterly newsletter dedicated to helping hospitals provide protection for their youngest patients. Each edition of this free newsletter will feature current infant security events in the news, and each issue we’ll analyze an actual infant abduction case. Cases will be analyzed to determine how security was defeated and recommended preventive measures.

Parental Education Vital for “New Moms” “In The Hospital & “After They Go Home”

Why is it so important to educate “New Moms” on their role in the protection of their newborns during their hospital stay, as well as after discharge? It’s sad but true. There are people who want a baby so badly that they will stop at nothing to get one. As a result and despite heightened awareness, babies continue to be kidnapped from hospitals. Surprisingly, we find that most babies are taken from the mother’s room! Because many hospitals have tightened security in their pediatric units the incidents of infant being abducted from home is on the rise. Security experts agree that an informed mother is the baby’s first-line-of-defense while in the hospital and after returning home.

Hospitals should provide the psychological profile and modus operandi (MO) of a typical abductor to the parents. All educational material should be provided in writing and signed by the mother. This certifies that she has received the material and understands her role to assist in the protection of her baby during her hospital stay as well as after she returns home. Information that should be provided to inform and educate “New Moms” on this potential threat includes:

- The psychological profile of the abductor
- The Modus Operandi (MO) of the abductor
- Never to leave her baby alone at any time
- How the hospital will keep her baby safe
- Hospital security routines
- Hospital I.D. procedures
- The appropriate way to transport a baby
- How to protect personal information
- How to provide protection after mother and baby leave the hospital
- Procedures for home visits
- Risk of birth announcements
- Risk of outside decorations
- Sharing information with Love Ones & Family Members

As new parents begin their birthing experience, it is important to warn them about the remote threat of an infant abduction during their hospital stay, as well as after discharge. Even though infant abductions are extremely rare, it is essential for parents to have this security information to help develop “security

awareness” that will stay with them and help them protect their baby after birth and for many years to come.

Note: Jeff Aldridge is an internationally recognized healthcare security expert and has worked with Fortune 500 Companies in their design and development of state-of-the-art security products for the healthcare industry. Mr. Aldridge founded SAI in 1994 and continues to serve as a consultant to the National media and law enforcement on infant security issues. He was recently interviewed by NBC, CBS, and the FOX network on mother-baby mix-ups in relation to HR 78 which is a newly proposed Congressional Bill that mandates protection of newborns from abduction and mother-baby mix-ups in hospitals.

CASE STUDY #1003 Home Abduction

Victim Mother: 34 year old white female
Victim Baby: 7 week old Male
Location: Midwest

A casual acquaintance of the victim mother was able to lure the mother with her baby to the abductor’s home under the pretence of giving her free baby cloths. A short time after the victim arrived at the abductor’s home the abductor fired two shots into the mother’s head. Subsequently the victim’s body was found along a railroad tracks less than 10 minutes from her home. It was determined by investigators that the husband helped in the disposal of the victim’s body as well as helping to hide the evidence. As part of the abductor’s elaborate story, family members and friends were told the baby was born at home. Fortunately, one of the guests attending a baby shower, given by the abductor’s friend, noticed that the baby did not appear to be a newborn. She contacted police anonymously after the baby shower. Police immediately went to the abductor’s residence. She told police that her baby had been born ate home with the assistance of a mid-wife. The abductor provided several names of individuals who could verify her story and that she had been pregnant. After police spoke with several witnesses, they were unable to verify her story. The abductor was immediately arrested and the baby was recovered. Positive identification of the baby was determined after a blood sample and footprints were taken and compared to hospital records. After several hours of questioning by police the husband finally told authorities of the elaborate plot and led them to the railroad tracks where the mother’s body had been discarded.

The abductor was charged with first-degree murder and kidnapping. Her husband was also arrested for kidnapping and charged with additional crimes related to the abduction.

Contributing Factors / Vulnerabilities (these will change from case to case)

• Victim Mother & Abductor casual acquaintance	• Abductor lied to family and friends
• Ruse used to lure unsuspecting mother	• Abductor lied to police
• Significant other involved (Husband)	• Abductor fakes pregnancy
• Elaborate plan formulated by abductor	• Mother victim of severe violence
• Casual observer detected flaw in plan	• Critical mistake leads to abductors capture

Preventive Measures For Moms

1. Be suspicious of casual acquaintances or strangers that attempt to befriend you.

2. Learn the hospital's procedure for home visits and require prior notification before a visit.
3. Before allowing official visitors into your home, require verification & photo identification.
4. Be aware of strangers that come to the door asking to see your baby for any reason.
5. Under no circumstance should you relinquish your baby to a stranger.
6. Do not allow casual acquaintance or strangers to baby-sit your baby.
7. Never leave your baby alone when away from home. Babies have been taken from malls, vehicles, & other places.
8. Do not place birth announcements in the newspaper. If announcements are placed, use only last names w/ no address.
9. Do not place decorations outside announcing your baby's arrival. Balloons & ribbons make the home a target.
10. Do not give out information on you or your baby over the phone or in person to casual acquaintances or strangers.
11. Educate family and friends on infant security that will also be responsible for looking after your baby.

NOTE: Consult with a Healthcare Security Professional with expertise in infant and pediatric security to assist you and your staff in developing the most effective and cost efficient security program for your facility. In most cases, a security professional can save the hospital considerably more money than would be spent on the consultant's fee.

IN THE NEWS

Woman Pleads Guilty To Taking Infant From Mother

Rueda-Banuelos Befriended Baby's Mother - POSTED: 3:33 p.m. MST October 27, 2003

<http://www.thedenverchannel.com/news/2585613/detail.html>

New law protects babies in hospital - People loitering in maternity wards can be jailed and fined

By Barbara Anderson - [The Fresno Bee](#) (Published Friday, September 19, 2003, 9:22 AM)

Mother / Baby Mix-Ups in the News

<http://www.newspronet.com/products/feeds/SweepsFeed/2003/0308/13930-BabySwap.wmv>

"Baby Swap" - NewsPronet Interactive Special Report produced by *SweepsFeed*

Faulty ID check caused hospital mishap

By Michael Lasalandra / Boston Herald - [The Fresno Bee](#) (Published Wednesday, October 1, 2003)

"Officials at Melrose-Wakefield Hospital said "human error" was to blame for a mix-up that caused a new mother to start breast-feeding another woman's baby. In a statement, the hospital said an internal investigation found that the mistake resulted from an inaccurate check of the ID bracelets on the mother and baby.

The hospital said it will institute additional precautionary measures that will require two nurses to independently check the ID bracelets every time a baby is brought to its mother's bedside. "We are very concerned for the two families involved and we recognize that a mistake has been made," said Steven Kapfhammer, hospital executive vice president, in a statement." . . . Meanwhile, the Department of Public Health said it will also investigate the incident, which occurred at 4:30 a.m. Wednesday. "We'll be looking to see if the hospital's policies for patient identification are adequate and whether they followed their own policies," said Rosanne Pawelec of the DPH.

On-line resources

Vulnerability Assessments

http://www.saione.com/services_vulnerability.htm

Birthing Center Assessment Outline (Sample)

<http://www.saione.com/sampleassessment.htm>

Sentinel Event Policy and Procedures, Revised: July 2002 -

http://www.jcaho.org/accredited+organizations/behavioral+health+care/sentinel+events/se_pp.htm

Future Newsletter Topics

Hospital Liability “When to hire a Security Expert”

Components of a “Self-Assessment”

How to conduct a successful “Code Pink”

Educating Employees and Staff

“Pros & Cons of an Infant Protection System”

Fallacy of Foot Printing – are they a “thing of the past?”

Mother/Baby Mix-ups “How to Prevent the Unthinkable”

How to select an Infant Security Systems

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