

Communication Quality of Infant Sleep Resources for Parents: An Environmental Scan



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Introduction

Infant sleep is vital for brain maturation and cognitive development¹. For new parents, it is also often a topic of concern about which they seek additional knowledge². However, the quality of online parenting resources shows great variability and may impact parental perception². For instance, new parents might reject advice they perceive as judgmental³. Consequently, the communication quality of resources (including the clarity, relevance and visual organization) is a key factor when considering online resources^{3,4}.

Objective

The aim of this environmental scan was to describe the state of parent-targeted infant sleep resources in Canada, and to assess the communication quality of these resources.



Methods

Data search

Using the Ontario Public Health Libraries Association's custom Google search engine, a total of N=1910 results were screened from both federal and provincial sources, with keywords "(baby OR infant) AND sleep". Further searches of French resources were done in Quebec and New Brunswick.

Inclusion/Exclusion criteria

Resources were included if they:

- Targeted parents of infants under 2 years
- Had a significant portion of the information focused on infant sleep
- Were created by a Canadian government agency or health organization

Extraction

n=132 resources

The CDC Clear Communication Index was used to assess communication quality along four subscales⁴:

- A: Core Items: main message, language, information design
- B: Behavioural Recommendations: importance of recommendations, instructions
- C: Numbers: explanation of numbers, if the audience must do calculations
- D: Risk: explanation of risk, possible impact

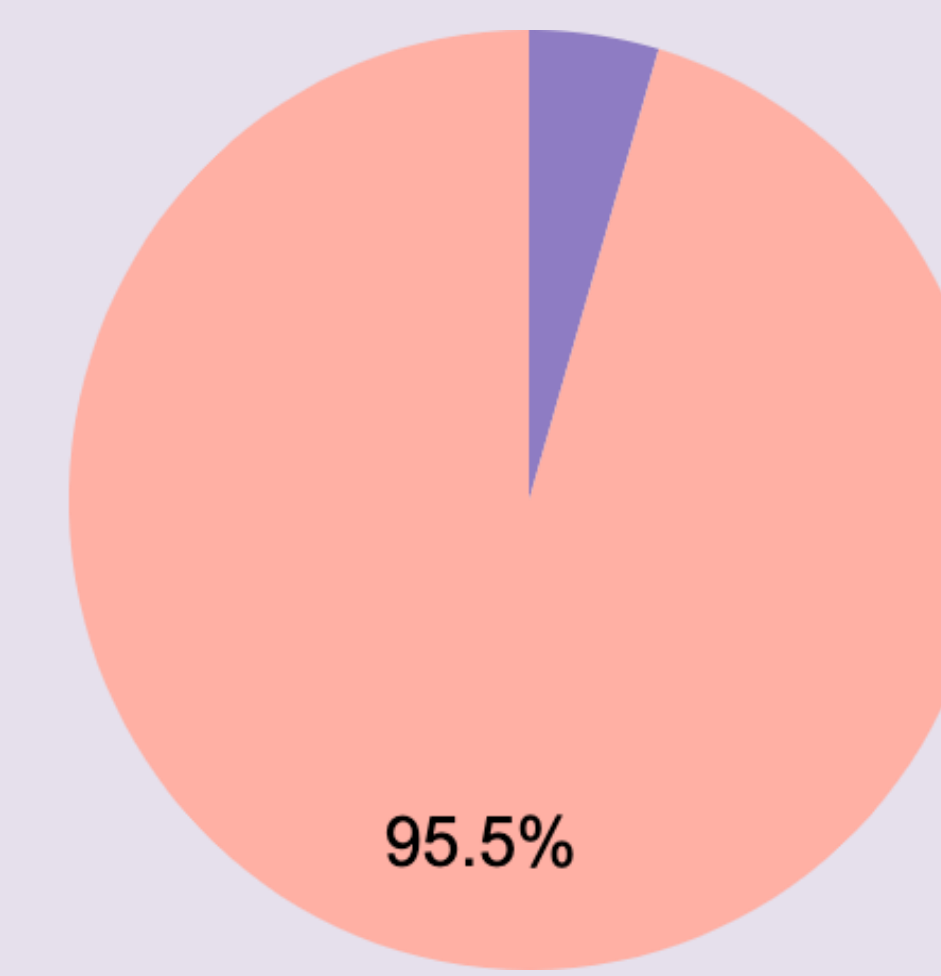
The total score and each subscale were converted into a percentage, where a 90% is considered satisfactory⁴.

Results

Total Score

Mean: 69.98%
SD: 12.49
Max: 100%
Min: 37.50%

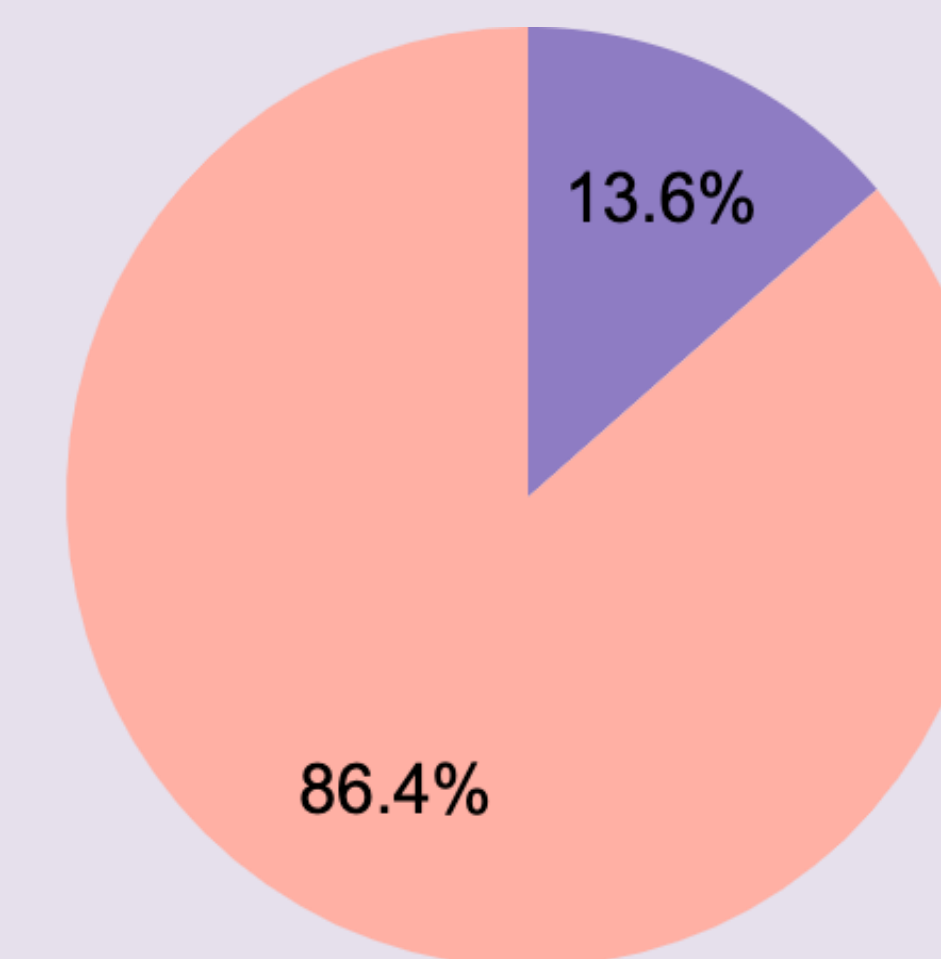
- Unsatisfactory
- Satisfactory



A: Core Items

Mean: 62.26%
SD: 19.89
Max: 100%
Min: 18.18%

- Unsatisfactory
- Satisfactory

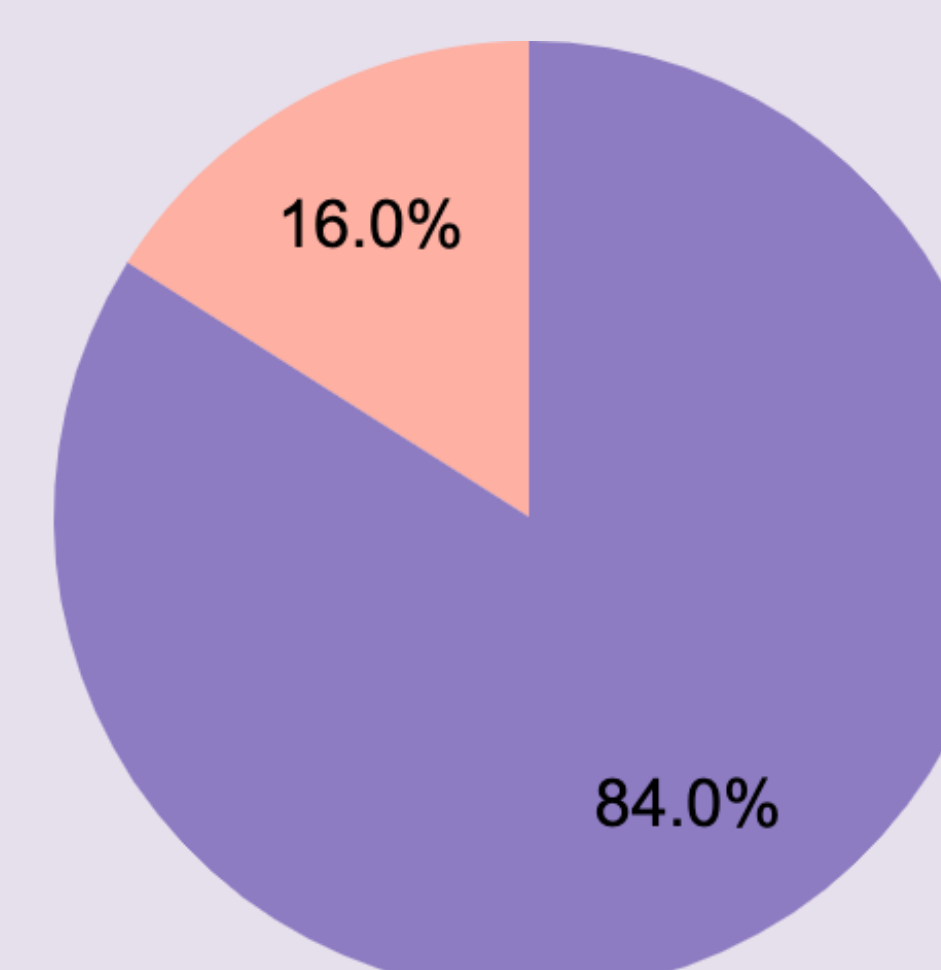


B: Behavioural

Recommendations

Mean: 92.62%
SD: 18.16
Max: 100%
Min: 33.33%

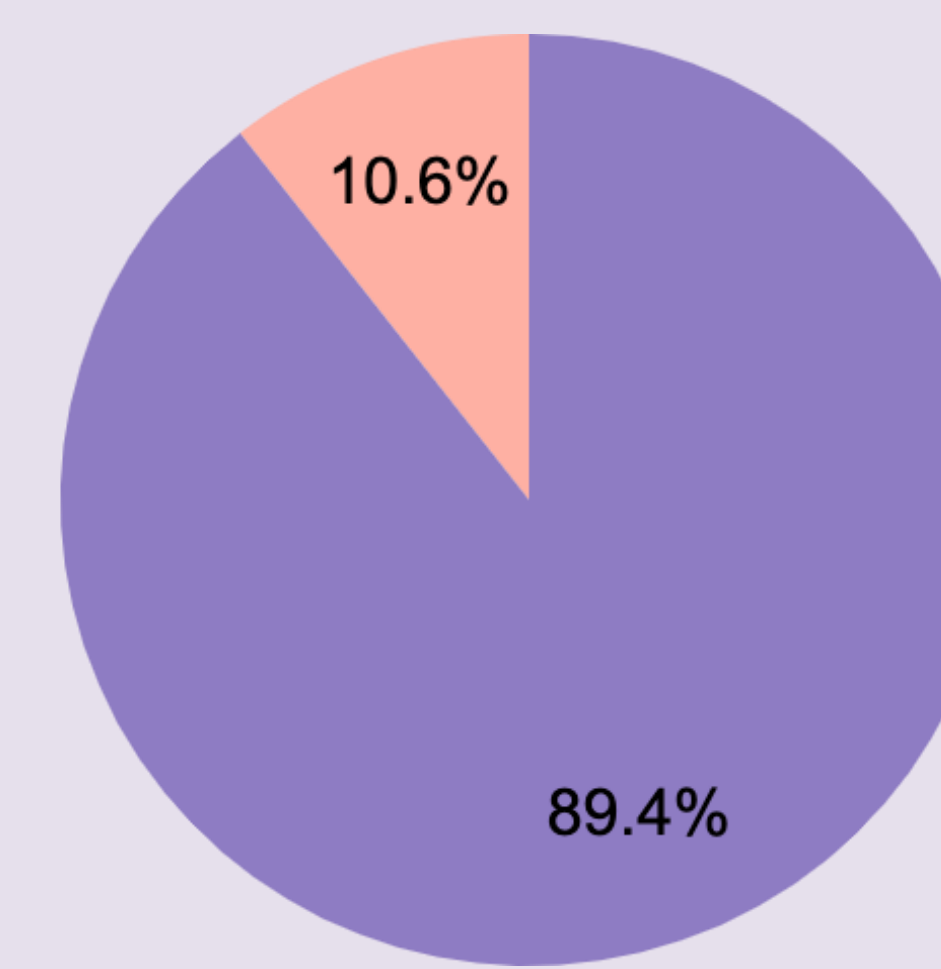
- Unsatisfactory
- Satisfactory



C: Numbers

Mean: 94.44%
SD: 16.82
Max: 100%
Min: 33.33%

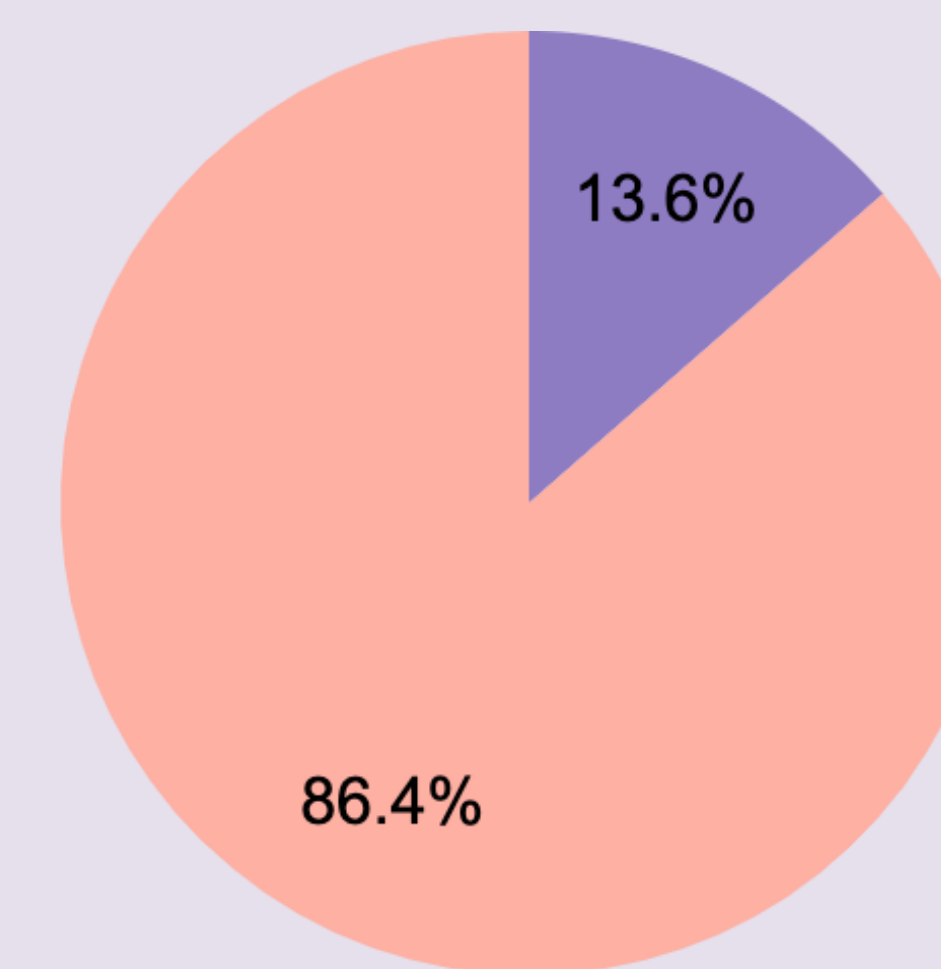
- Unsatisfactory
- Satisfactory



D: Risk

Mean: 47.73%
SD: 26.28
Max: 100%
Min: 0%

- Unsatisfactory
- Satisfactory



Conclusion

Most infant sleep resources do not meet the communication quality standards as measured by the CDC, driven by low scores on the subscales of Core Items and Risk. Therefore, parents might feel confused when consulting online sleep resources. Ways to improve scores on the Core Items include⁴:

- Having a main message at the top or front of the resource
 - Using the vocabulary of the primary audience
 - Organizing information into bulleted lists
- Some ways to improve scores about risk include⁴:

- Describing the threat and its impact
- Addressing the benefits and risks of recommended behaviours
- Explaining numeric probabilities with words and visuals

Whether these resources are consistent with advice provided by health professionals remains to be clarified.

References

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- ⁴Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2023, June 28). *The CDC Clear Communication index*. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. <https://www.cdc.gov/ccindex/index.html>

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