Author's response to reviews

Title: Early childhood development when second-trimester ultrasound dating disagrees with last menstrual period: a prospective cohort study

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Author's response to reviews: see over
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The Editor
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Dear Editor:

Here are our point-by-point response to your and the reviewers’ comments.

EDITOR’S COMMENTS:

(1) Title: The acronym LMP to be written in full in the title.
The title has been revised to reflect this comment.

(2) Formatting: Please separate results and discussion sections.
To address this comment, a distinct DISCUSSION section has been carved out.

(3) Ethics: Experimental research that is reported in the manuscript must have been performed with the approval of an appropriate ethics committee. Research carried out on humans must be in compliance with the Helsinki Declaration (http://www.wma.net/e/policy/b3.htm), and any experimental research on animals must follow internationally recognized guidelines. A statement to this effect must appear in the Methods section of the manuscript, including the name of the body which gave approval, with a reference number where appropriate.
The METHODS section (page 5) has been revised to reflect this comment.

REVIEWER 1:

(1) The main limitations include the absence of adequate dating and the age of the study. It has been done 25 years ago... while several countries now performed 1st trimester dating ultrasound. The authors should include and review very recent papers that look at discrepancies in the first trimester. Moreover, the authors did not discuss the type of IUGR (symmetric & asymmetric) or the potential causes, leading to another potential bias. Finally, the authors did not report the Bailey score results in the subgroup of neonates with 17 weeks’ discrepancy + IUGR at birth. In this scenario, if there is still no association with long-term development, we could potentially assume that there is actually no long-term effect of the discrepancies. Actually, it is difficult to estimate what proportions of the 17 weeks’ discrepancies were associated with incorrect LMP or real-discrepancy.
The DISCUSSION section (pages 11 and 13) has been revised to reflect these comments.

Note that we searched for, yet were unable to locate any recent publications that specifically examined the association between first-trimester dating discrepancies and subsequent cognitive development in the infant. If we have overlooked relevant literature, please let us know and we will gladly integrate these references into our manuscript.
We disagree that the inability to distinguish between symmetric and asymmetric IUGR is a limitation of this study. Assessing whether SGA at 17 weeks is symmetric or asymmetric presents a significant challenge. Meanwhile, it is unclear what bias may be associated with failing to make that distinction. In any event, this aspect is not the major focus of the paper.

REVIEWER 2:

(1) The abstract is not completely representative of the study design. The proportion (%) of complete follow-up from the original population has to be reported.
The ABSTRACT has been revised to reflect these comments.

(2) The limits of the study have to be discuss, including all potential selection biases
The DISCUSSION section (pages 11 and 13) has been revised to reflect these comments.

(3) The recent data regarding similar association with discrepancies noted at the first-trimester ultrasound should be discussed.
To reiterate, we did not locate relevant recent literature on this relationship, but if provided with applicable references would be glad to integrate them into our manuscript.

Respectfully submitted,
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