Title: Analysis of Neonatal Mortality: Is Standardizing for Relative Birth Weight Biased?

Authors:

Dr Robert W Platt (robert.platt@mcgill.ca)
Prof Cande V Ananth (cande.ananth@umdnj.edu)
Michael S Kramer (michael.kramer@mcgill.ca)

Version: 2 Date: 29 Apr 2004

Dear editor:

We thank you and the reviewers for their helpful suggestions regarding our paper. We have revised the paper accordingly, and hope that the resubmission will be acceptable for publication. We have addressed the changes as follows:

Reviewer 1

Minor Essential Revisions:

1. We reanalyzed the data split into two datasets based on time (1989-1991 and 1995-97), per the reviewer's suggestion. There were no material differences between the two analyses, and we have addressed this in the text (page 7 paragraph 0 and page 8 paragraph 4).
2. We have added to the methods (page 6 paragraph 1) and discussion (page 11 paragraph 0) sections to address the issue of optimal birth weight.
3. The editorial suggestions including changes to the figures suggested by the reviewer have been made. In particular, we have added a sentence (page 6 paragraph 0) clarifying that "Blacks" and "Whites" refer to the race of the mother, and we have replaced Table 2 with Figure 5.

Discretionary revisions:

1. We have added to the discussion to address this issue and to soften the conclusion (page 11 paragraph 2).

Reviewer 2:

Page 3: all corrections made.

Page 5: A sentence was added to address this issue.

Page 6: corrected.

Page 8: corrected.

Page 9: We have added a comment on optimal birth weight, and deleted the phrase as suggested.

Page 10: We have added to the first paragraph, and to the second on birthweight.

Page 11: We have added a concluding paragraph.
Reviewer 3:

Underlying assumptions: We have added to the discussion to address this (page 11 paragraph 2).

Repeat births: We do not believe that this would have a major effect on our findings, and have added a sentence in the methods to address this (page 6 paragraph 1).

Inductions and >41 weeks: We have added to the discussion to address this (page 10 paragraph 3).

Variability: We agree that this deserves comment and have added to the results section to address this (page 7 paragraph 2).

We hope that the reviewers' concerns are addressed and thank you for consideration of our article.

Yours truly,

Robert Platt