Reviewer's report

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

Version: 1 Date: 11 March 2004

Reviewer: Russell S Kirby

Reviewer's report:

General

This is a very interesting paper that adds to the literature concerning the cross-over of birth-weight specific neonatal mortality curves for white and black infants, and provides new information on the potential utility of the concept of 'relative' birth weight. The comments below are intended to tighten the language and arguments to give the paper broader impact.

重大修稿要求（作者必须在决定发表前回复）

次要修稿要求（如图例标签缺失，或术语使用错误，作者可以信任自己纠错）

On p 3 - consider using more current references than ref 5. Delete 'Yet it is clear that' in first para, and add the second 'r' to 'occurred'. Specify somewhere early on that the subject of this study is neonatal mortality. The bottom sentence would read better as 'Also unexplored is how . . .'.

On p 5 - explain why Hispanic births are not accounted for (near bottom of page). Apparently they are included in the white and black race groups - why? Or why not?

On p 6 - spell 'demonstrate' correctly

On p 8, first sentence of discussion, the phrase 'some of which confirm results reported elsewhere' is unnecessary. Restate 'i.e. relative birth weights below zero'.

On p 9 - please speculate in first full paragraph on the clinical implications of the observation that proximity of observed birth weights to optimal birth weight may account for survival differences by race. Last para, delte 'that has been proposed'.

On p 10 - incomplete para at top - what is new in these observations, and how does this paper add to the debate? Next para - would it be worthwhile to also comment on the accuracy of birth weight, at least by reference?

Finally, the paper needs a concluding paragraph on p 11 to suggest where we go from here.
Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)

What next?: Accept after minor essential revisions

Level of interest: An article whose findings are important to those with closely related research interests

Quality of written English: Needs some language corrections before being published

Statistical review: No

Declaration of competing interests:

None.