**Author's response to reviews**

**Title:** Determinants of rapid weight gain during infancy: baseline results from the NOURISH randomised controlled trial.

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**Author's response to reviews:** see over
Dear Editor,

We thank the reviewers for the additional comments on our paper. We agree with all the recommendations and have made the changes as outlined below. We have attached a copy of the final manuscript and also a copy with track changes and we are happy to make any alterations you may require. We now believe that the paper has been improved significantly.

Below we have given a point by point response to the reviewers comments:

**Reviewer 1:**

Regarding the authors’ response to my previous comment, “Please clarify that this is a cross sectional study …”

The authors obtained the data regarding the exposure (infant feeding practices) and the infant weight at the same follow-up visit. The infant weight is a key component of weight gain, the outcome. Because the exposure does not precede the outcome, this is not strictly a longitudinal design. This is an important distinction in interpreting the findings because causation in either direction is possible – feeding practices may have influenced weight gain, or weight gain may have influenced feeding practice (reverse causation). The authors should make this clear in the paper, and should also report the time referent for the infant feeding questions.

We agree with the reviewer and now have inserted a sentence in the discussion on page 15 about the above. We have also made it more clear in the methods section on page 7-8 that exposure variables were collected at the time of the assessment.

For most of the analyses, the authors report feeding of solid foods at the time of assessment, but they also appear to have data on feeding solid foods <4 months, which is a more consistent time point across subjects, and more relevant to other literature on this topic. Why not perform all analyses with the variable feeding solid foods <4 months?

We agree with the reviewer and thank her for pointing this out. We have now rerun the analyses using early solid feeding (solids <4 months) as a covariate. Although this has meant that some of the odd ratios have changed slightly the final results and conclusions remain the same. We have made adjustments to the Table 3, the abstract, results and discussion to reflect this change.

**Minor essential revisions:**

1. Data collection, 1st para. Please clarify what is meant by “a critical subset” and “willing non-consenters.”

We have now made adjustments to this paragraph to make it easy to read and the above terms have been removed.
Reviewer 2

The authors have addressed many of my comments appropriately. However I feel there is one minor essential revision to make. Both reviewers raised the issue of a dose response effect, or the potential effects of mixed/combination feeding in comparison to either breast or formula alone, and I feel the authors could do more to convince readers that this is not a 'problem' or hidden issue in their study. The authors presented analyses to the reviewers which suggest that there would not be significant differences or effects when such factors are examined, but these were not entered into the revision of the manuscript nor commented upon. I would suggest adding a sentence to summarise these analyses to the results section of the study.

We thank the reviewer for this and we have now added a paragraph to the results section on page 12 summarising these results.

Once again we would like to thank the reviewers for their helpful suggestions and we now believe the article has been improved significantly. We look forward to hearing from you soon.

Yours sincerely
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