Reviewer's report

Title: Determining an anthropometric surrogate measure for identifying low birth weight babies in Uganda: a hospital based cross sectional study

Version: 1 Date: 10 January 2013

Reviewer: Peter Cooper

Reviewer's report:

This is a report of a study to assess the value of various anthropometric measures in predicting birth weight. Such information would be very valuable in regions where the measurement of birth weight may not be possible due to logistic reasons, e.g. clinics where there are no scales, home deliveries etc. The methodology is described in detail and adequate training of research personnel was undertaken. Data analysis was appropriately done. The results indicate that foot length is the measurement that correlates best with birth weight and also has the advantage of being simple to do. Their study is broadly in keeping with similar studies that have been done in other parts of the world and provides information that could be used in routine health visits. The discussion and conclusions are appropriate to their results and the limitations of the study are stated.

Discretionary Revisions

1. The lowest birth weight in their sample was 1370g. They excluded babies from their study if their condition was unstable at birth and figure 1 indicates that 6 babies were excluded as their birth weight was <1000g and presumably needed immediate care. The authors should clarify how many babies weighed 1000-1370g at birth and whether they were excluded due to “difficult breathing”, cyanosis etc.

2. Many babies with birth weight 2000-2500g are growth restricted and are not necessarily in need of special care, but those <2000g at birth are at higher risk. As with the Tanzanian study they quote (ref 17), it would be useful to extend their analysis to indicate what foot length would predict a weight of <2000g. The Tanzanian study also looked at predictors of birth weight <1500g but I would guess that their number in this category would be too small to analyse.

Minor Essential Revisions

The references need to be revised according to standard guidelines – many of the journal names are not listed by their standard abbreviations and several references are lacking page numbers etc.

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

Quality of written English: Acceptable
**Statistical review:** Yes, and I have assessed the statistics in my report.

**Declaration of competing interests:**

I declare that I have not competing interests