Reviewer's report

Title: Associations between preterm birth, small-for-gestational age, and neonatal morbidity and cognitive function among school-age children in Nepal

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Reviewer: Kirsty Donald

Reviewer's report:

This is a large population based prospective study in an under-researched population. The question posed is an important one and the results and discussion address this comprehensively.

There are some errors in the text. In the abstract, the prevalence figures for SGA, preterm and lbw are different to those at the beginning of the results section (the order of the figures appears to be incorrect rather than the figures themselves). There seems to be some data missing from the tables (relating to diet). It would also be far better to quote actual figures in the results section rather than phrases such as "about 50%" for a categorical variable such as gender.

There are some areas which should be addressed for clarity.
As this study built on the cohort from the previous micronutrient study it would be useful to see a flow diagram of the original cohort groups and what the attrition was (including where possible, reasons for this). There are no clear inclusion/exclusion criteria for what was considered an eligible child for assessment. This is critical information for the reader to be able to contextualise the data, especially as these children were drawn from a population where some of them would have received a potentially relevant intervention at antenatal and preschool level.

Of the 1927 families approached what were the reasons for children not being included?
The authors should define what they mean by "maternal literacy was low and nutritional intake inadequate". Data was collected on this information, but the text lacks interpretive clarity (for example are maternal literacy levels low as compared to the rest of Nepal's population or as compared to European or US norms?).

Although the authors postulate that the lack of findings in the preterm group may have been due to higher mortality in this setting, seeing evidence for the attrition from the original cohort may make this hypothesis clearer. This particular finding is the most markedly discrepant from the existing body of literature on longterm neonatal outcomes. Therefore, the additional analysis of a "very preterm" group (which also didn't reveal an association with poorer long term neurocognitive outcomes), should definitely be included in the results section and not only
introduced in an explanatory sentence in the discussion.

**Level of interest:** An article of importance in its field

**Quality of written English:** Acceptable

**Statistical review:** No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

**Declaration of competing interests:**

I declare that I have no competing interests