Author's response to reviews

**Title:** A new growth chart for preterm babies: Babson and Benda's chart updated with recent data and a new format

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PDF covering letter
I sincerely thank Dr Brabec for his thorough review of the paper and for his good suggestions for improvement. Each concern raised has been addressed with a brief addition to the paper as outlined below.

1. Some type of validation is needed.  
   Response: There are a number of approaches that may be used to validate the growth chart. The data from the large multicenter cohort study done by the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development Neonatal Research Network has been superimposed on the new growth chart and included as Figure 4. This is described in the methods and results sections and mentioned in the discussion.

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3. Was the precision constant between the studies?  
   Response: Unfortunately the literature that accompanied the population based data sources does not include a description of the scales and tapes used to measure the infants, nor of the accuracy of these instruments. Since the data sources were population based, it is likely that a variety of precision occurred. While measurement errors are very important for accurate growth monitoring of an individual, errors may not be as important for population surveys since they tend to be evenly distributed[1]. This is now mentioned in the discussion on page 14.

4. The averaging together of the males and females should be addressed with statistical testing or perhaps quoting some data.  
   Response: Both some data and some statistical testing results have been added to the methods section on page 6.

5. Provide details regarding the smoothing of the curves.  
   Response: It was difficult to merge two pre- and post-term data sets at their boundaries. The process is now described in the methods section on page 7.

6. What method was used for to adjust for multiple comparisons?  
   Response: The Bonferonni method to adjust for multiple comparisons was used. This is now noted in the methods section on page 8.

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9. Could there be a secular trend over time in the data?  
   The following has been added to the discussion on page 11: There has been a slight trend towards an increase in birthweight of term infants in the United States and in Canada of 1 to 3 grams per year on average over the time frame that the data were collected [2,3]. However, no trend is apparent among infants of lower gestational ages [2,3]. Regarding head and length size, there is some evidence of small increases over this time period [4].
Reference List


