Reviewer's report

Title: Catch-up growth up to ten years of age in children born very preterm or with very low birth weight

Version: 1 Date: 5 March 2005

Reviewer: Aimon A Niklasson

Reviewer’s report:

General
An important work with important data started already 1983. Even if there is a relatively high drop out frequency, and the infants height at 10 years of age are only reported by the parents, the authors make relevant adaptations and drop out analyses, although some improvements are suggested below. Further follow up during puberty later will increase the importance of this longitudinal study.

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Major Compulsory Revisions (that the author must respond to before a decision on publication can be reached)
None

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Minor Essential Revisions (such as missing labels on figures, or the wrong use of a term, which the author can be trusted to correct)
Regarding BMI (Result final part). BMI for all children was... 1 point below Dutch reference values. Explanation of what 1 point is or changing the sentence is suggested. Table 1 should be improved by showing clinical characteristics in the drop out group. Hospital days in table 1 (median (or mean))?? Even if it is stated that there is no difference in morbidity between the groups Necrotizing enterocolitites may be more extended in the preterm SGA group. In order to convince neonatologists who treat these severely sick infants (NEC) and see there severely disturbed growth curves after gut resections it is also of great importance to know that the findings regarding SDS are not related to NEC. If not it can be stated in a sentence, but it needs to be calculated.

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Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)
It would be of some help to give confidence limits for de deviating SDS even if the total group is relatively numerous, subgroups are less so. In the discussion of if reported values are imprecise I doubt it will be the same for all groups (probably it is better in the group not growing so well) but I also don't think it will change the main result. Ref 18 4th author should be spellt Albertsson Wikland. (It is misspelt in PUBMED)

What next?: Accept after minor essential revisions

Level of interest: An article of importance in its field

Quality of written English: Acceptable

Statistical review: No

Declaration of competing interests:
I declare that I have no competing interests