Reviewer's report

Title: Actuarial Survival of a Large Canadian Cohort of Preterm Infants

Version: 1 Date: 5 August 2005

Reviewer: Maureen Hack

Reviewer's report:

General

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Major Compulsory Revisions (that the author must respond to before a decision on publication can be reached)

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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)

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1. In the abstract it needs to be stated that the numbers in the brackets refer to confidence intervals.

2. The authors define small for gestational age if the birth weight was less than the 10th percentile for gestational age according to Arbuckle (1999). However, more recently updated information is available for the Canadian population (Kramer), although this probably does not need to be changed since whether the infants were small for gestational age is not a major outcome measure.

3. For the actuarial analysis, survival to 60 days of life was considered. In the discussion the authors might note that preterm infants may die even after this time in the post discharge period.

4. The authors have responded to my critique that outborn infants who die are not included in the results. On rereading the manuscript I note that only 20% of the infants were transports. The authors could thus have examined survival and actuarial survival for the 80% of the population who were inborns although such added results would relate mainly to death in the first 24-48 hours.

5. In Figures 3 and 4 the asterisks in the figure indicating groups with significant male/female differences in mortality rates are missing.

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Discretionary Revisions (which the author can choose to ignore)