Reviewer's report

Title: Late preterm is a risk factor for growth faltering in early childhood: a cohort study

Version: 2 Date: 6 August 2009

Reviewer: Ekhard Ziegler

Reviewer's report:

This study reports weight and length at 1 and 2 years of age of children born late preterm in comparison to infants born at term. The sample is from a population-based cohort born in 2004 in Pelotas, Brasil. Follow up was excellent.

1. Anthropometry
   a) Length was measured throughout and should always be referred to as such, not as "height"
   b) Methods employed at birth must be stated
   c) The method of weighing the mother with and without the child is odd. This reviewer is not familiar with it. The authors need to provide some indication of its validity and its accuracy.
   d) Weight and length at 12 mo and 24 mo must be reported
   e) When odds ratios are reported (Tables 3 & 4), it must be stated what the reference was
   f) The calculation of gain in weight and length must be described in terms that a non-statistician can follow. What do the results (Table 3 & 4) mean, g/year and cm/year? And it must be explained why simply subtracting initial weight/length from final weight/length does not do. The notion that a difference as small as 1 cm is highly significant is counterintuitive. Also counterintuitive is the finding that the difference in length gain is in favor of the late preterm children, while the difference in weight gain is in the opposite direction for 12 - 24 mo.
   g) Gain in weight and length from 12 to 24 mo should be reported (in addition to birth to 12 mo and birth to 24 mo)

2. Language:
   a) "Late preterm" is an adjective, it always needs a noun with it. The noun could be "infant" or "child", with child being preferred. Whatever noun is chosen, it should be used consistently.
   b) Odds ratios indicate the degree of difference. It is not appropriate to say "the OR was higher", it should be "the odds of being .... were higher as indicated by the OR of ...."

3. Title: Add "birth" after preterm.
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