

DECLARATION:

I, Cheryl Mackay, declare that this research report is my own work. It is being submitted for the degree of Master of Medicine in the branch of Paediatrics in the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination at this or any other University.

Signed: _____

_____ day of _____ 2010

Dedicated to my parents
Judy and David Mackay

PUBLICATIONS AND PRESENTATIONS ARISING FROM THIS STUDY

Mackay C, Ballot D. Growth patterns in a cohort of very low birth weight infants in Johannesburg: A retrospective review. Proceedings of the 28th Priorities in Perinatal Care Conference. In press.

ABSTRACT

INTRODUCTION: Improved survival of VLBW infants is raising several management issues. An example is that of growth and growth monitoring.

AIM OF THE STUDY: To assess the growth of a cohort of VLBW infants born at CMJAH from term CGA to 20 months CGA.

METHODS: A retrospective chart review was conducted on 139 VLBW infants (birth weight $\leq 1500\text{g}$) born at CMJAH between 1 July 2006 and 28 February 2007.

RESULTS: Comparison with a term growth reference showed initial growth failure followed by gradual catch up growth but with persistent deficits in length for age. Comparison with international VLBW references showed similar growth for weight and head circumference for age but with deficits in length for age. Growth parameters of the study sample were similar to those of other South African VLBW infants.

CONCLUSION: Growth and growth monitoring in VLBW infants is complicated by characteristic growth patterns, high associated morbidity, controversies surrounding ideal growth and lack of an ideal growth reference. Significant deficits in length for age in the study sample may have been due to the large proportion of infants born SGA and the high prevalence of stunting in South African children. Current recommendations for growth monitoring of VLBW infants include the use of a VLBW reference up to two years CGA followed by a term growth reference thereafter.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
DECLARATION	ii
DEDICATION	iii
PUBLICATIONS AND PRESENTATIONS	iv
ABSTRACT	v
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	vi
TABLE OF CONTENTS	vii
LIST OF FIGURES	xi
LIST OF TABLES	xii
NOMENCLATURE	xiv
1.0 INTRODUCTION AND LITERATURE REVIEW	1
1.1 Background	1
1.1.1 The Role of Growth Monitoring	1
1.1.2 LBW and VLBW Infants in Context	3
1.2 Growth of the VLBW Infant	3
1.2.1 Pattern of Growth	3
1.2.2. Factors affecting Growth	4
1.2.3 Catch up Growth	6
1.2.4 Growth of the South African VLBW infant	8
1.2.5 Association between LBW and the Metabolic Syndrome	9
1.2.6 The Role of Adiposity	11
1.3 Growth Monitoring in Preterm and VLBW Infants	13
1.3.1 Growth Monitoring in the Postnatal Period	13
1.3.2 Growth Monitoring after Term CGA	15
1.3.3 The “Ideal” Growth Reference for VLBW Infants	17
1.4 Conclusion	18

2.0 AIM OF THE STUDY	19
3.0 METHODS	20
3.1 Subjects	20
3.2 Data Collection	23
3.3 Data Analysis	24
3.3.1 General	24
3.3.2 Comparison with the WHO-CGS	25
3.3.3 Comparison with international VLBW infants	26
3.3.3.1 Comparison with IHDP references	26
3.3.3.2 Comparison with Casey references	27
3.3.4 Comparison with South African VLBW infants	28
3.3.5 Factors contributing to Growth Failure	29
4.0 RESULTS	31
4.1 Descriptive Data	31
4.1.1 Clinical and Demographic Data	31
4.1.2 Comorbid Conditions	32
4.1.3 Data on Loss to follow up	34
4.2 Growth Measurements and Analysis	35
4.2.1 Comparison with healthy term infants	35
4.2.1.1 Weight for Age	35
4.2.1.2 Length for Age	36
4.2.1.3 Weight for Length	37
4.2.1.4 Head Circumference for Age	38
4.2.1.5 Extent of Growth Failure Relative to Term Infants	40
4.2.2 Comparison with international VLBW infants	40

4.2.2.1 Overview of Data collected	40
4.2.2.2 Weight for Age	43
4.2.2.3 Length for Age	45
4.2.2.4 Head circumference for Age	47
4.2.3 Comparison with South African VLBW infants	50
4.2.4 Variables Affecting Growth	51
5.0 DISCUSSION	54
5.1 Introduction	54
5.2 Initial Growth Failure	55
5.3 Catch up Growth	57
5.3.1 Weight	57
5.3.2 Length	59
5.3.3 Weight Relative to Length	63
5.3.4 Head Circumference	64
5.4 The Dilemma of Growth Monitoring	65
5.5 Factors Contributing towards Growth Failure	66
6.0 CONCLUSION	68
7.0 RECOMMENDATIONS	69
8.0 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY	70

8.1 Study Design	70	
8.2 Gestational Age Determination	71	
8.3 Loss to Follow Up	71	
APPENDIX A	WHO Child Growth Standards	73
APPENDIX B	IHDP Growth References	76
APPENDIX C	Data Collection Sheet	80
APPENDIX D	Graphs of growth measurements (weight, length and head circumference) of the study sample according to sex	81
APPENDIX E	Reference data for VLBW infants according to Casey et al ⁵⁸	84
REFERENCES		85

LIST OF FIGURES:

Figure	Page
4.1 Pie chart showing maternal HIV results for the sample	33
4.2 Pie chart showing HIV PCR results for HIV exposed infants in the sample	33
4.3 Pie chart showing percentages of patients who were lost to follow up before 12 months CGA	34
4.4 Pie chart showing reasons for loss to follow up before 12 months CGA	34
4.5 Line graph representing weight for age Z scores for male and female infants combined	35
4.6 Line graph representing length for age Z scores for male and female infants combined	37
4.7 Line graph representing weight for length Z scores for male and female infants combined	38
4.8 Line graph representing head circumference for age Z scores for male and female infants combined	39
4.9 Comparison of weight for age between the IHDP sample and the study sample for male infants	43
4.10 Comparison of weight for age between the IHDP sample and the study sample for female Infants	44
4.11 Comparison of length for age between the IHDP sample and the study sample for male infants	46
4.12 Comparison of length for age between the IHDP sample and the study sample for female infants	47
4.13 Comparison of head circumference for age between the IHDP sample and the study sample for male infants	48
4.14 Comparison of head circumference for age between the IHDP sample and the study sample for female infants	49

LIST OF TABLES:

Table		Page
4.1	Clinical and demographic features of the study sample	31
4.2	Comorbid conditions in the study sample in the neonatal period	32
4.3	Proportion of the sample greater than or equal to 2 SD below the mean for weight, length and head circumference	40
4.4	Growth parameters (weight, length and head circumference) according to age for male infants	41
4.5	Growth parameters (weight, length and head circumference) according to age for female infants	42
4.6	Weight and length parameters of male infants according to age for the current sample compared with a previous cohort of SA VLBW infants	50
4.7	Weight and length parameters of female infants according to age for the current sample compared with a previous cohort of SA VLBW infants	51
4.8	Growth parameters at 12 months CGA in infants born SGA and those born AGA	52
4.9	Growth parameters at 12 months CGA in infants with and without severe illness in the neonatal period	52

4.10	Growth parameters at 12 months CGA in infants ventilated in the neonatal period and those not ventilated	53
4.11	Growth parameters at 12 months CGA in infants who were HIV exposed and those who were not exposed	53

NOMENCLATURE:

AGA	Appropriate for gestational age
BPD	Bronchopulmonary dysplasia
BMI	Body mass index
CDC	National Centre for Health Statistics and the Centre for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion
CGA	Age corrected for gestational age
CMJAH	Charlotte Maxeke Johannesburg Academic Hospital
HMD	Hyaline membrane disease
HREC	Human research Ethics committee
ICU	Intensive care unit
IHDP	Infant Health and Development Program
IMCI	Integrated Management of Childhood Illness
IVH	Intraventricular haemorrhage
LBW	Low birth weight
MRI	Magnetic resonance imaging
NEC	Necrotizing enterocolitis
NICHD	National Institute of Child Health and Human Development
SD	Standard deviation
SGA	Small for gestational age
UN	United Nations
VLBW	Very low birth weight
WHO	World Health Organization
WHO-CGS	World Health Organization Child Growth Standards