

## Low Birth Weight Babies

Sir,

The study by Yadav<sup>1</sup> failed to look into the most important aspect of low birth weight babies (LBW) which is the obstetric outcome of these babies. It is also unfortunate that the association between birth weight and maternal weight was not analyzed because small mothers have been shown to have small babies<sup>2,3</sup>. One would expect the maternal weight from the local ethnic groups to be lower. This factor might be a reason for the higher percentage of LBW among the ethnic groups in the study.

In Kuantan Hospital we are currently looking into our low birth weight babies in our continuing efforts to reduce our perinatal mortality and morbidity. Estimation of gestational age is a major problem in

our study. What was the proportion of women in Dr Yadav's study with confirmed gestational age?

In his concluding paragraph, Dr Yazad recommended that emphasis in antenatal care be given to reduce LBW in Lundu. It is novice to make a sweeping statement that antenatal care will affect the LBW incidence without the supporting evidence of a prospective controlled trial. Reducing LBW babies will require improvement in the status and education of women, the socio-economic condition, general health, diet and fertility control involving a multidisciplinary effort from the local political, education and health authority.

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### References

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3. Edwards LE, Alton IR, Barrada MI & Hakanson EY. Pregnancy in the underweight woman. *Am J Obstet Gynecol* 1979;135 : 297-301.