

# Postnatal growth of abandoned preterm babies

Musoke, RN; Jitta, JN

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## **Abstract:**

Eighteen abandoned low birth weight infants matched for sex and gestational age with infants who had mothers were followed up till discharge or death. Anthropometric measurements were taken on recruitment and then weekly. Initially all infants were on breast milk. For the abandoned ones, milk was obtained from other mothers. Results show that the abandoned infants were on breast milk until they attained a mean weight of 1960gm. This coincided with a postnatal age of 6 weeks. For the rest of the period they were on artificial feed. Mean birth weight was 1403 +/- 302 and 1337 +/- 204 for cases and controls respectively while the mean gestation was 30 weeks. Anthropometric measurements were similar at the beginning of the study and both groups regained birth weight at 2 weeks. Thereafter the rate of weight gain of 16gm per day for the cases was significantly lower than that of 22gm per day for the controls. Similarly midarm circumference increases were much lower in the cases than in controls (0.2cm versus 0.4 per week). There were however no significant differences in length and head circumference increases. A significant number of cases (94.4%) had one or more episodes of serious infection and 38.9% died. None of the control infants died and only 10.5% had serious infection.