

The Need to Redefine Neonatal Period

I read with interest Dr. Meharban Singh's view point(1) on the need to redefine the neonatal period. I am in full agreement with his view and the arguments that he has put forward. I would, however, like to add that the criteria of the weight of the baby should also be included as one of them. Often one has faced the dilemma of a marasmic baby who needs the specialized care of the nursery, but one is unable to offer these services since the child is more than a month of age. The actual weight in this context may be debated. To start with, the cut off point may be the expected weight of a baby 3 months old (50th percentile).

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REFERENCE

1. Singh M. The need to redefine neonatal period. *Indian Pediatr* 1996, 33: 423.

Reply

I am pleased to know that Dr. Katyayan is in full agreement with my views on the "Need to Redefine the Neonatal Period". I have my reservations regarding her suggestion to use the expected weight of the baby at 3 months as a cut off point for the neonatal period. The weight of a newborn baby and its growth potential may be affected by a large number of factors such as intrauterine 'malnutrition, fetal infections, genetic factors and a variety of neonatal problems especially nosocomial bacterial infections which are rampant in our country. It would be more appropriate and logical to restrict the concept of neonatal period to "conceptional age" rather than weight of the baby.

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