

Video Transcript: Study Reveals Multiple Factors That Influence Premature Infant Outcomes

April 17, 2008

SLATE: Dr. Rosemary Higgins, Neonatologist, NICHD, discusses the Neonatal Research Network study

It's an extremely difficult situation for parents. /// No one ever expects to have a baby born early, let alone very early at 22 to 25 weeks.

Babies who are born at two pounds or less usually need the help of breathing machines or ventilators, they also need to be fed through the vein oftentimes or with tubes. They are high risk for infection, heart problems and brain problems.

SLATE: The results..

The network performed this study to try to determine what would best help physicians and parents with respect to baby's survival.

Based on the results from this study, in addition to gestational age, there's four other factors which can be used to predict outcomes. These include birth weight or the estimated weight on the ultrasound of the baby, whether or not the baby is from a single or multiple pregnancy, whether or not the mother received anti-natal steroids which is medicine that is given to promote lung growth and development in babies, and also the sex of the baby, whether or not it's a boy or a girl.

If you use all those five factors in combination, you can more accurately determine what potential outcomes could be for survival, survival with disability and survival with what we've called profound disability.

SLATE: Using this information...

Parents and doctors can use this information by going to the NICHD web site, to our outcomes data form. If you insert the baby's estimated weight, the number of weeks pregnant the mother is, whether or not the mother got steroids, whether it's a boy or a girl and whether or not there's one or more babies.

We've developed this tool so parents and care providers can go to the web site, put their information in and receive information back that was based on the network's study that will help to better inform decisions.

SLATE: Using the web tool

This is such a difficult time for parents and physicians when a mom presents with a potential of delivering a baby very early. The information that we provide is there to try to help parents and physicians make decisions through these difficult times.

Treatment decisions need to be made on all available information, this is one piece of information that one can get from the web tool in order to better make treatment decisions for individual children.

END SLATE:

To use the web tool, visit

http://www.nichd.nih.gov/about/org/cdbpm/pp/prog_epbo/