

A STUDY ON WEIGHT GAINS OF PREMATURE INFANTS USING TWO METHODS OF FEEDING*

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Premature babies can be fed by any of the following methods, breast, medicine dropper, bottle or gavage. This particular study dealt on the last two methods of feeding, on the hypothesis that premature infants fed by gavage method gain weight faster than babies fed by bottle.

Sixty premature infants delivered at Iloilo Mission and Governor Benito Lopez Memorial Hospitals from 1983 to 1986 were studied. Thirty premature infants were on bottle feeding and thirty premies were on gavage feeding.

The sixty premature bases were selected on the following criteria:

- (a) Birth weight of 1,500 grams to 2,500 grams.
- (b) Fed with the same brand of milk.
- (c) Stayed in the hospital for not less than five weeks.
- (d) Accommodated in the isolette for the entire study period of five weeks.
- (e) Placed on either bottle or gavage feeding from birth to the end of five weeks.

From birth to the end of five weeks daily weights of every premie under study were taken and recorded. The sources of the data were the patient's record charts in the two hospitals.

The data gathered revealed that premature babies who were fed by bottle were at the start heavier than those who were fed by gavage. They continued to be heavier than the gavage-fed group for the first three weeks of life, although both groups lost weights beginning the first week of life after birth. Regaining of weight loss started in the third week and the gavage-fed babies began to catch up in weight gain beginning the fourth week.

At the end of five weeks, the data showed that the critical ratio was significant at five per cent level of significance, with the gavage-fed babies weighing more than the bottle-fed premies.

This study concluded that premature infants fed by nasogastric feeding gained weight faster than babies fed by bottle.

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