

Low Birth Weight and Exposure to Violence in Iraq

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In Iraq, the prevalence of low birth weight (LBW) was 9% in the 1980 increased to 23.8% in 1990¹ and increased to 50% after 2003². Recently, Darweesh et al³ suggested that exposure to violence is a determinant of LBW in Iraq in addition to gestational weight gain (GWG). This work was carried out to assess gestational weight gain during pregnancy in Baghdad, Iraq.

A total of 408 mothers recently delivered attending primary health care centers (phcc) for vaccinated of their children. Interview as well as review of the antenatal care file was done.

Out of the total, 18.1% delivered LBW babies. The GWG of those delivered LBW was 12.5±4.6 kg and those who delivered normal birth weight babies were 12.5±3.4 kg. No significant differences in gestational weight gain between those who delivered LBW and those who delivered normal birth weight babies (Table 1). The observed rate (18.1%) is similar to that reported recently in Baghdad^{3,4}. This rate is higher than in the neighbor countries^{5,6}. This finding reflects the high LBW in Iraq.

No significant difference in GWG in delivering LBW or normal birth weight babies was noticed, which is inconsistent with that in literatures⁷. The difference might be explained of exposure to violence. Several articles showed that exposure to violence is a determinant to LBW⁸. Several articles in Iraq documented the exposure to widespread violence due to wars^{9,10}. domestic violence is so common in Iraq¹¹, which is in turns a new exposure to violence might be a determinant to LBW.

Exposure to violence might be contributed to LBW.

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Table 1: Distribution of LBW with GWG

Birth Weight	NO.	GWG
LBW	33	12.5±4.6
NBW	375	12.5±3.4

t=0.03, d.f=406, p=0.9