

# Minimum Reporting Set of nutritional intake and growth outcomes in preterm nutrition studies: A Delphi study

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## Abstract

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The estimated global preterm birth rate in 2020<sup>(1)</sup> was more than 10% of livebirths or 13.4 million infants. Despite the importance of neonatal nutrition in optimising growth, neurodevelopment, and later metabolic disease risk, there is inconsistency in nutrition recommendations for preterm infants<sup>(2)</sup>. Incomplete or inconsistent reporting of outcomes in nutrition intervention studies is part of the reason for the lack of consensus on optimal nutrition. To reduce uncertainty in measuring or reporting nutritional intake and growth outcomes in preterm studies, a consensus process is needed to identify relevant measures for patients, parents/caregivers, researchers, and health professionals. We aimed to develop a minimum reporting set (MRS) for measures of nutritional intake and growth in preterm nutrition studies. We collaborated with a group of international researchers from 13 countries and registered this study at the COMET initiative (registration number 3185). The target population was individuals born preterm at any gestational age and study location whose nutritional intake was assessed before first hospital discharge and whose growth was assessed at any age. Measures reported in preterm nutrition studies were systematically reviewed and used to develop the real-time Delphi survey<sup>(3)</sup> using Surveylet (Calibrium) software, including 13 questions about nutritional intake and 14 about growth outcomes. We used a snowball process to recruit participants from the consumer, healthcare provider, and researcher stakeholder groups with expertise in preterm infants, nutrition, and growth to rate the importance of each measure on a 9-point Likert scale. Participants initially rated the survey items without seeing other participants' responses, saved and refreshed the page to see the anonymous responses of other participants, and had the option to change their rating and provide reasons for their answers. Participants' final scores for each item will be used to identify the consensus criteria for that item<sup>(3)</sup>. To date, we have recruited 246 participants from 31 countries across 5 continents, including 58 (24%) consumers, 156 (63%) healthcare professionals, and 26 (11%) researchers. Preliminary findings indicate that 12 measures of nutritional intake and 4 of growth have met the criteria for inclusion in the MRS. However, participant recruitment and survey responses are ongoing. A final consensus meeting is planned for November 2024 to confirm the MRS.

**Keywords:** preterm; nutrition; growth; Delphi

**Ethics Declaration:** Yes

## References

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