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Letter to the Editor

Dear Editor,

We read with extreme interest the Student Research article titled “A longitudinal study to determine association of various maternal factors with neonatal birth weight at a tertiary care hospital” by Misra et al. published in *Med J Armed Forces India* 2015;71:270–273.¹ It is a relevant and ground level research work done by a young medical graduate on an issue that has impact on crores of people in a developing nation like India.

In their systematic review of 35 studies on outcomes of maternal weight gain, Siega-Riz et al. found strong evidence between inadequate gestational weight gain and decreased birth weight and excessive gestational weight gain and increased birth weight.² The outcome highlighted by the present study corroborates this observation again. The issue related to the suboptimal birth weight in babies born to mothers with inadequate weight gain during pregnancy particularly stresses the importance of awareness about benefit of adequate weight gain among prospective mothers. This is particularly relevant during the present day scenario where weight gain is considered to be a bad trend at any time, more so in body image conscious young mothers.

Long-term consequences of inappropriate birth weight need to be kept in mind as both extremes of birth weight affect early adult weight and add to the future risks of developing lifestyle diseases like diabetes, hypertension and cardiovascular diseases.^{3,4}

The study by this young author as primary worker reinforces the importance of recording BMI at the initial prenatal visit and need for educating them about diet, exercise and appropriate weight gain, at the initial and each antenatal visit throughout pregnancy.

It is heartening to note that young researchers have started focusing on the health issues that are relevant and address the actual need of our country. This becomes further apt considering the large load on health care of pregnant mothers and vulnerable neonates. We also appreciate the editorial

team for giving space for such encouraging endeavours by the enthusiastic medical graduates.

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