

LATE PREMATURE TWINS: ARE THEY AT A DEVELOPMENTAL DISADVANTAGE?**C. Halling, D. Corcoran***Department of Neonatology, Rotunda Hospital, Dublin, Ireland*

Background: Evidence suggests that twins are disadvantaged in terms of long-term growth and neuro-developmental status. This may in part be due to the increased risk of prematurity that twins face, in particular late prematurity.

Aim: We investigated neuro-developmental outcomes of a cohort of 40 pairs of late premature twins (32 + 0 to 36 + 6) at 2-3 years of age through a standardised developmental questionnaire, The Ages and Stages Questionnaire, 3rd edition. (ASQ) This group of children were compared to a control group of 40 pairs of term twins of similar age.

Methods: The Ages and Stages questionnaire is a developmental assessment questionnaire which looks at 5 areas of development. Twins were recruited from 4 centres across Ireland. Parents were contacted via telephone. The ASQ was sent out to each twin pair between 2-3 years of age.

Results: Both groups had mean scores in the normal range for all areas of development. The late pre-term group however, had statistically significant lower scores in the areas of communication, (mean 52.7 +/- 12.55 vs 58.6 +/-, p value less than 0.001), problem solving (mean 51.4 +/- 11.45 vs 57.7 +/- 3.89, p value less than 0.001) and fine motor (mean 43.6 +/- 10.94 vs 48.4 +/- 10.7, p value 0.01.)

Conclusion: Tools such as the ASQ are able to detect significant differences in development between late pre-term twins and term twins. The ASQ tool may be a cost effective means of surveying large populations of late pre-term infants who would not otherwise have developmental surveillance.