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### **300-gram premature baby girl doing well**

By Judy Siegel

JERUSALEM (November 19) - A "micropremature" baby girl born at Wolfson Hospital in Holon after 25 weeks and two days of gestation, weighing only 300 grams, has survived and is doing well. She is reportedly the smallest-ever baby to survive here and the second-smallest surviving infant in recorded medical literature.

The story of the infant, who at nine months weighed 4.47 kilos and functions normally except for a chronic lung illness and a mild delay in her motor ability, is published in the latest issue of Harefuah, the journal of the Israel Medical Association. The baby was born - with a head circumference of only 20 centimeters - to a 26-year-old mother and treated by Drs. David Kohelet, Eliana Arbel, Irit Tavori, and Rina Shochat. The girl was one of twins, but her brother, born weighing 540 grams, died of pneumonia when he was five months old.

She was treated for 30 days with high-frequency oscillatory ventilation to keep her lungs functioning, as well as an infusion of antibiotics. For some time, doctors tried to wean her from her respirator, but they were unable to because of transitory cessation of breathing and slow heartbeat. Finally she was able to breathe on her own, but is still treated with oxygen for her lung condition. She also overcame a small brain hemorrhage without any major deficits.

At nine months, with a head circumference of 36.5 centimeters, her brainstem auditory evoked response was normal, and her psychomotor development was that of a six-month-old baby.

The authors note that the survival rate of babies with a gestational age of less than 24 weeks is low, although great strides have been made in improving the chances of larger pre-term babies. She is the smallest surviving baby in the world who suffered from respiratory distress and underwent the specialized lung therapy.

"The survival of premature babies weighing less than 400 grams is possible, even if after birth vigorous intervention and resuscitation are required. The question to be asked is: Why are there so few reports in the medical literature of survivors" among infants of this size, the authors wonder.

"One of the possible answers is that only few get intensive care after their birth. The initial decision of doctors who treat them whether to resuscitate such babies after their birth is influenced by consideration of their future quality of life if they survive."

But this baby showed she can survive and lead a normal life, the doctors conclude.

They add that the cost of hospitalizing the baby in intensive care cost Wolfson Hospital NIS 250,000, while the differential payment from the health fund (as set down by the Health Ministry), is only NIS 60,769.

Thus the hospital subsidized the treatment to the tune of NIS 189,586.

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