Abstract

Introduction: The nutrition of very low birth weight (VLBW) infants is aimed at promoting a similar growth to that occurring in the uterus. However, in practice this is difficult to achieve and extrauterine growth restriction is frequent. The current tendency is to avoid this restriction by means of early parenteral and enteral nutrition. Nonetheless, uncertainty about many of the practices related with nutrition has resulted in a great variation in the way it is undertaken. In 2009 and 2011 in our hospital there was an unexpected increase in necrotizing enterocolitis. To check to see whether our nutrition policy was involved, we undertook a systematic review and drew up clinical practice guidelines (CPG) about enteral feeding in VLBW infants. New considerations about the duration of the fortification and the use of probiotics have led to an update of these CPG. Methods: A total of 21 clinical questions were designed dealing with the type of milk, starting age, mode of administration, rate and volume of the increments, fortification, use of probiotics and protocol. After conducting a systematic search of the available evidence, the information was contrasted and summarized in order to draw up the recommendations. The quality of the evidence and the strength of the recommendations were determined from the SIGN scale. Comment: These CPG aim to help physicians in their decision making. The protocolized application of well-proven measurements reduces the variation in clinical practice and improves results.

Keywords

Low birth weight infant, Prematurity, Necrotizing enterocolitis, Probiotics, Clinical Practice guidelines, Evidence-Based medicine, Nutrition.