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Longitudinal Changes in Family Outcomes of Very Low Birth Weight

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Objectives Although children with very low birth weight (VLBW, <1500 g) are at high risk for developmental impairments, we know little about the long-term effects of VLBW on families. This study examined long-term family outcomes and their stability over time. **Methods** Participants were the families of 64 children with <750 g birth weight, 54 with 750–1499 g birth weight, and 66 term-born controls. Family burden and parental distress were assessed annually as part of longitudinal follow-up of the children from mean ages 11–14 years. **Results** Family burden and parental distress were higher in the <750 g group than in the term-born group, but differences varied with the child's age and family environment. **Conclusions** The findings document long-term effects of VLBW on families that are moderated by the degree of low birth weight, child's age, and family environment.

Key words: family outcomes; low birth weight; longitudinal change.

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