**Definitions**

**Bronchopulmonary dysplasia** was considered in infants who were receiving supplemental oxygen at 36 weeks of postmenstrual age [1]

**Gestational age** was determined with the use of the best obstetrical estimate based on the date of the last menstrual period, and/or prenatal ultrasonography. If the best obstetrical estimate was unavailable or uncertain, gestational age was determined on the basis of the neonatologist’s estimate with the use of physical examination criteria, such as the New Ballard Score [2].

**Necrotizing enterocolitis** was defined as Bell’s stage II to III, according to the modified Bell’s classification (with scores ranging from I to III and higher scores indicating greater severity of disease) [3]. **Surgical NEC** included cases requiring surgical management of the disease.

**Respiratory distress syndrome** was considered in preterm infants who developed respiratory insufficiency from soon after birth and had lung X-ray findings compatible with pulmonary immaturity and surfactant deficiency [4].

**Sepsis** was classified according to the time of its appearance after birth as **early-onset** (≤72 hours of life) or **late-onset** (>72 hours of life) [5,6]. Cases of **confirmed** early- or late-onset **sepsis** had positive blood cultures for microbes or fungi and of **possible sepsis** clinical and laboratory evidence of sepsis but negative blood cultures.

**Intraventricular hemorrhage** was defined according to the criteria of Papile et al [7].

**Small for gestational age** was defined as birth weight below the 10th percentile on the Fenton preterm growth charts [8] .

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