

Table 3 Characteristics of mothers of 69 446 low birthweight and normal weight infants in 18 low- and middle-income countries in 2005–2013

Maternal characteristics	Low birth weight		Normal weight		P
	n	(%)	n	(%)	χ^2
Maternal age (years)					
15–19	568	(13.2)	3745	(86.8)	< 0.001
20–24	1541	(9.7)	14 305	(90.3)	
25–29	1538	(8.1)	17 383	(91.9)	
30–34	1155	(7.7)	13 756	(92.2)	
35–39	838	(8.5)	8996	(91.5)	
40–44	479	(10.4)	4127	(89.6)	
45–49	119	(11.7)	896	(88.3)	
Birth order					
1	2,227	(10.6)	19 920	(89.9)	< 0.001
> 1	4,011	(8.5)	43 288	(91.5)	
Preceding birth interval (months)					
< 18	397	(12.1)	2871	(87.8)	< 0.001
18–23	438	(9.2)	4337	(90.8)	
24–35	863	(8.4)	9347	(91.5)	
> 35	2313	(8.0)	26 733	(92.0)	
Place of residence					
Urban	2936	(8.7)	30 829	(91.3)	0.01
Rural	3302	(9.2)	32 379	(90.7)	
Education					
No education	248	(11.7)	1869	(88.3)	< 0.001
Primary	1901	(10.1)	16 897	(89.9)	
Secondary	3094	(8.7)	32 338	(91.3)	
Higher	992	(7.6)	12 063	(92.4)	
Wealth index					
Poorest	1882	(11.3)	14 780	(88.7)	< 0.001
Poorer	1540	(9.4)	14 748	(90.5)	
Middle	1202	(8.5)	13 009	(91.5)	
Richer	960	(7.8)	11 378	(92.2)	
Richest	654	(6.6)	9293	(93.4)	
Wanted pregnancy					
Wanted	4077	(8.5)	44 109	(91.5)	< 0.001
Not wanted	2156	(10.2)	19 057	(89.8)	
Child sex					
Male	2964	(8.2)	33 031	(91.8)	< 0.001
Female	3274	(9.8)	30 177	(90.2)	

In conclusion, our study reinforces the need to encourage pregnant women to attend ANC to reduce LBW, with its short- and long-term consequences. Policies should in particular address access to and quality of ANC among disadvantaged socioeconomic groups, which are at higher risk of LBW. Uneducated mothers are less likely

to understand health messages and to be concerned about their health and nutritional status. Poorer women are less likely to afford the cost of ANC and transportation in areas where health infrastructure is distant.

Funding: None.

Competing interests: None declared.