

I'm ธนยุรัตน์ ปังเส็ง from Periwinkle's Clan. The issue that I will be discussing about is that of extreme premature births.

[ธนยุรัตน์ ปังเส็ง](#) (my Facebook)

There was a time where we did not possess technology or skills that we could use to improve the probability of a premature baby surviving. Babies born before the fullterm (37 weeks) will lack the time for their organs to fully develop, resulting in them struggling to survive. This gets worse the more premature the baby is.

Now, we have made leaps and bounds in the skills available to lower the birth mortality rate. We have phototherapy to treat jaundice, injections which delay the onset of labour and steroids for the baby to develop lungs that they can breathe with. Intensive care units are equipped with state-of-the-art technology which can give the support to allow premature babies to survive. This has saved the lives of many babies. However, there is a limit to what we can do. The survival rate of babies has increased significantly for those born at 25 weeks and above. But we have been largely unsuccessful at increasing the survival rates of the extreme preterm babies (24 weeks and below) despite all these new technologies meant to reduce birth mortality rate. ([งศดและสื่อดสวสจ](#))



This has resulted in some controversy. According to the Nuffield Council on Bioethics ([ไม่รุนแรง](#)), babies born between 22 and 23 weeks may be considered if the parents still insist on treatment even after an exhaustive discussion of risks incurred, but they are not considered at all if under 22 weeks. The survival rate of babies before 24 weeks is only around 1% even with the treatments, and doing so would only serve to prolong the pain of invasive treatments when they are likely to die anyway. Even if the extreme

preterm baby were to be successfully treated, they stand a much higher risk of developing various complications in their life; examples include neurological damage such as cerebral palsy, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder and impaired cognitive skills and contracting diseases such as type 2 diabetes and asthma. ([แต่ยังแอฟถ่ายะยูน](#))

In spite of all the risks and problems incurred, many parents insist on having their babies, however premature, to get treatment, even if they may have to spend more money to raise them (psychologist, special needs, healthcare). All attempts must be made to ensure the survival of their babies. This is because the addition of a new member of the family is generally viewed as a joyous event, and it can feel unethical to allow their newborn to be left to die when treatment could have potentially saved them.

There are several instances where babies have been born before 22 weeks; Amillia Taylor and Jayden Capewell are two examples. Neither of them would have been legally entitled to medical treatment due to their extent of prematurity. However, both of their mothers wanted their children to get treatment. This is even more so since both had many failed attempts at getting children.

In Amillia's case, her mother Sonja had to endure infections and a fever for 3 weeks, putting herself at great risk. Sonja underwent premature labour and was told that if at the first sign of an infection, Amillia would be delivered (and not given treatment if she was too premature). She was secretly sponged and given ibuprofen tablets (from outside the hospital) to give the illusion that she was fine. In fact, the only reason why Amillia was given the medical treatment is because the doctors believed the pregnancy to be more advanced than it really was. Amillia is an example of how even an extreme preterm baby can possibly survive; she even lived past the age of two. ([ละกัันวันนีคนเยอะ](#))

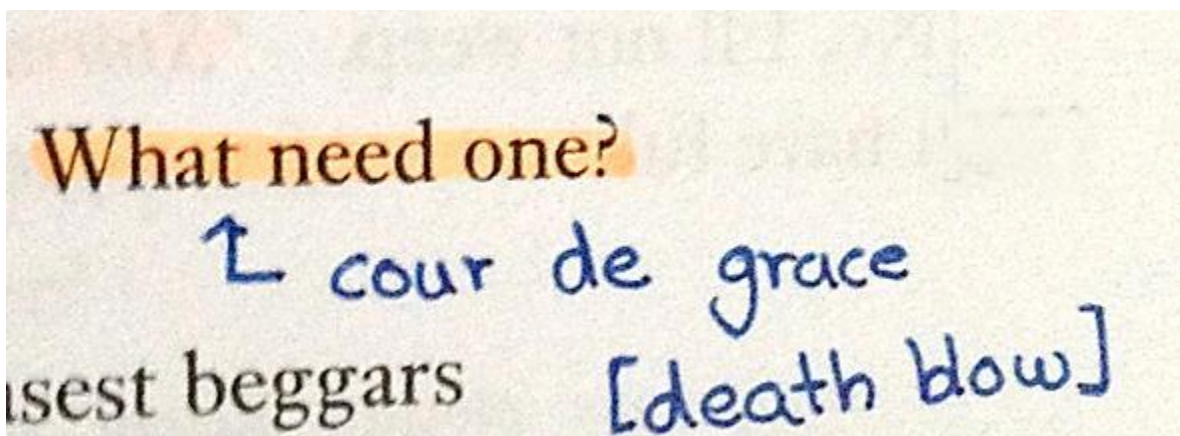


Jayden wasn't as fortunate, though. His mother Sarah gave birth to him two days before the point where he could get medical treatment. Even though Jayden had a strong heartbeat, could breathe unassisted and could move his limbs, one paediatrician that Sarah approached said "No we don't" in response to her plea for help, while the other doctors simply ignored the fact that Jayden was alive and only came after he had died,

treating it as a miscarriage. Sarah did not even get steroids to improve Jayden's lungs or injections to slow the onset of labour, and had difficulty getting a birth and death certificate for Jayden. This is an instance where the guidelines were followed strictly, such that Jayden did not get a chance to survive when access to medical treatment and the special care baby unit could have made all the difference. (สุวัฒน์จิ่งไฉเนอฉั่มส์)

I feel that given these two cases, while the guidelines may be followed to some extent, it is ultimately left to the parents to decide if they want their premature babies to be given medical treatment or not. It should be such that they can recommend not having the baby undergo treatment, but if the parents still want it, the baby should not be denied treatment. Regardless of how small the probability of survival is, the provision of medical treatment can allow for the baby to survive. It is also not sufficient to go by the number of weeks alone; depending on the condition of the baby at birth, the risks would have to be analysed case-by-case rather than merely by statistics; a fullterm baby with blue skin and minimal movement is probably less likely to survive than Jayden if both were allowed equal access to medical treatment. As for the problems which they may grow up with, we have to be more accommodating towards them, especially since fullterm babies also do have some of these problems (albeit at a lower frequency).

I view births without treatment to be akin to abortion. As the baby would have the ability to have the sense of pain and other senses, even if they may not be fully developed, we could say that to deny the baby treatment, particularly when the parents insist on it, is causing them intense pain and negligence during their brief lives. Additionally, they may have been able to present significant contributions to the world, but never had an opportunity to do so.



Poor Jayden. Literally a death blow just because of this issue.