**Abstract**

**Objective:** To describe the incidence and risk factors for *Candida* sepsis (CS) in very low birth weight (<1500 g) premature infants and compare these factors with earlier data.

**Design:** This is a retrospective chart review case-control study of 94 infants with a BW <1500 g admitted to the NICU (MetroHealth Medical Center, Cleveland, Ohio) between January 1, 2000 and December 31, 2015. Infant groups with (*n* = 47) and without (*n* = 47) CS were compared. Forty seven infants with CS confirmed by positive blood culture were identified. Controls (n=47) without CS were matched using BW, gestational age, and date of birth.

**Results:** Of the 47 cases of CS identified, 31 (66%) occurred in infants with a birth weight <750 g and 45 (96%) were in infants <1250 g. The overall incidence of CS was 2.6% in infants <1500 g. CS was diagnosed at a median age of 21 days. All 5 infants with CS who died weighed <750 g at birth. *Candida albicans* (*n* = 24, 51%) and *Candida parapsilosis* (*n* = 21, 45%) accounted for most of the infections. Overall incidence of CS in <1250 g babies was 3.5%, compared to 19% in same center historical cases (1996-1999)1. The incidence was lowest following 2010. Examined maternal and perinatal risk factors were not associated with CS. Postnatal *Candida* colonization was associated with CS (*p* = 0.00125). Examined risk factors were no different in infants with CS versus the controls. For unexplained reasons infants with CS versus controls had lower mortality. Mortality among cases (BW <1250) fell from 30% to 11% when historical cases (1996-1999) were compared to current cases (2000-2015) (*p* = 0.0183).

**Conclusions:** The incidence and mortality rate of *Candida* sepsis in infants <1500 g admitted to the MHMC NICU have decreased significantly from late the 1990s onwards with the lowest incidence noted since 2010.