

QA 24 - Prader-Willi Syndrome

QUESTION:

The parents of a 4 year 2 month old female with Prader-Willi syndrome have been asking about if (and or when) it is appropriate to begin growth hormone therapy. Both parents are above average in stature: mom is 67 inches tall and dad is 74 inches. The child's weight for height is at the 75th percentile and height is at the 10th percentile for age. Her weight is stable.

ANSWER:

One of the physical characteristics of Prader-Willi syndrome is short stature. In addition, some (but not all) children with this syndrome also demonstrate reduced levels of growth hormone. Growth hormone therapy is used only when there is documented growth hormone deficiency, not just short stature or stature related to parental height. A referral to a pediatric endocrinologist is indicated to make this assessment. If this girl's height at 10th percentile is on the NCHS chart, then this would be a little taller than average for girls her age with Prader-Willi syndrome.

Reference:

- 1) Greenswag, LR, and Alexander, RC: Management of Prader-Willi Syndrome, 2nd ed., 1995, The Prader-Willi Syndrome Association, New York, Springer-Verlag.