**Supplementary Material 6**

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### Invitation letter to Delphi survey

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*31st May, 2019*

Dear Parent/Colleague

**Invitation to participate in Phase B of the CASSAVA Study**

We warmly invite you to participate in the CASSAVA study. You have been invited because of your interest in, or experience of, preterm birth - as a parent, researcher, clinical expert, or charity representative.

This invitation letter outlines the aims and objectives of the CASSAVA study and the requirements, if you agree to be involved. We realise that the professionals and parents we are approaching are extremely busy but, because of the important help you can bring to the project, we hope that you will agree to participate. In practical terms, we would require no more than a few minutes of your time for two online surveys plus attendance, with expenses paid, at a meeting in London in July 2019. The date for this meeting (Delphi Workshop) is Friday, 5th July 2019 at the Academy of Medical Sciences, 41 Portland Place, Marylebone, London W1B 1QH.

The CASSAVA study aims to find the groups of women and babies in preterm labour or with planned preterm delivery in whom is there clinical uncertainty about the best planned mode of birth (vaginal or caesarean). We also want to find out whether women and clinical staff would be willing to participate in a future randomised trial where women are randomly allocated to one of these two birth options. The CASSAVA study has been divided into three phases. Each phase has specific aims and objectives.

Phase A of the study, has been completed and was a survey of the opinions of clinicians and the public regarding current practice.

We are inviting you to participate in Phase B of the study and this aims to choose those scenarios most likely to be appropriate for a research study in the future. For example, women with babies under, or over, 32 weeks of pregnancy, with the baby in breech position (baby’s bottom in the pelvis) or cephalic (head-down) presentation.

Phase C will be a series of interviews with clinical staff and focus groups with women.

***What would taking part in phase B involve?*** There will be two-rounds of on-line surveys and a face-to-face meeting.

Round 1 Participants will receive an e-mail with a link to the web-based questionnaire (We will send a postal questionnaire to those who do not have regular access to a computer). Participants will be asked to score each clinical scenario and may also suggest further clinical scenarios for future scoring, or to join-up two scenarios into one.

Round 2 The scenarios will be carried forward to round two and participants will be asked to re-score their preference to reach consensus on a shorter list.

Final Consensus Participants who participate in both rounds of the survey will be invited to the final consensus meeting. The consensus meeting will discuss the clinical scenarios presented in round 2 to agree an even shorter list of scenarios useful for a future research study (trial).

***What are the possible benefits of taking part?*** There is uncertainty about the best mode of birth for preterm babies (vaginal or caesarean). Therefore, your participation in the study will help to provide key information to help design a research study (randomised controlled trial) to investigate the scenarios prioritized through the consensus process above; aiming to improve outcomes for mothers and babies.

***What will happen to the results?*** We will write a draft protocol at the end of Phase B and this will be presented to participants in phase C. Once Phase C is complete we will provide a report, which the funder (HTA) will use to decide if they want to fund a study (randomised controlled trial) which we will design at the end of this process. Bliss and Tommy’s, our research partners, will also share the results so families and health professionals may read about what we found.

***What will happen if I don’t want to carry on with the study?*** You are free to withdraw from the study at any point and you will not be required to give a reason for withdrawal.

Should you wish to discuss the project or your participation in more detail, please feel free to contact me on 0131-242-2696.

Thank you in advance for your time.

Yours sincerely

*Jane Norman* and Dimitrios Siassakos

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*on behalf of the CASSAVA research team*