Mathematical bias in assessment of placental residual blood volume.

Running title: Assessment of placental residual blood volume

Vincent Rigo, MD PhD; Caroline Lefebvre, MD; Masendu Kalenga, MD PhD

Neonatology division

CHU de Liège, Université de Liège, CHR Citadelle

Corresponding author:

Vincent Rigo
Service universitaire de Néonatologie
CHR de la Citadelle
1, bd du 12eme de Ligne
4000 Liège
Belgium
vincent.rigo@chu.ulg.ac.be

Authors emails:

clefebvre@chu.ulg.ac.be

Masendu.Kalenga@ulg.ac.be

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We read with interest the randomized controlled trial by Mercer et al.\textsuperscript{1} Their study adds valuable information to the debated question of the ideal timing to clamp the cord for term infants. However, in their description of early outcomes, we consider that the formula used to evaluate the relative placental residual blood volume (rPRBV) is prone to “mathematical” bias: As delayed cord clamping allows blood to be transfused from the placenta to the baby, the birth weight (BW) is increased by the intervention, as found in their report\textsuperscript{1} and previous studies\textsuperscript{2}. Therefore, using an intervention dependant-BW as a denominator to compute rPRBV (rPRBV=PRBV/ BW) will amplify differences between immediate and delayed cord clamping groups. The sum of birth weight and absolute PRBV would not be affected by the timing of cord clamping; this sum could then be used as the fraction’s denominator (rPRBV=PRBV/ (PRBV+BW)) to allow a more robust estimation of rPRBV difference.

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