

Submission
No 9

INQUIRY INTO BIRTH TRAUMA

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Partially
Confidential

On 11th August 2016 I presented to Hospital early hours of the morning in labour with my second baby. Soon after arriving my waters broke and the pain was extensive. I was asking for pain relief and was offered gas which made me extremely sick. Between vomiting and contractions I was begging my midwife for other pain relief as I was screaming in pain. She kept telling me she just had to wait and would see how far dilated I was. She left me like this until it was too late for pain relief. I thought the worst of it was over, but how wrong could I be. Due to having only 1 hour 45 minute active labour and 2 minutes of pushing to get my son out my body went into shock and my cervix began to close before the placenta was out. I had a team come in to tell me that they were getting an OR ready and I have 15 minutes to get my placenta out before they took me to theatre.

Whilst in birthing suite they manually removed my placenta. My body was in so much shock that I could not even stand by myself and my whole body was shaking uncontrollably.

They got me off the bed and into the shower where I passed a clot similar in size to my placenta. The midwife turned to me while I stared in disbelief at what just came out of my body stating "well that's better out than in!".

I continue to lose clots and had nurses on maternity ward massaging my stomach to release them (without being told what was actually happening. I was informed this was just to help my uterus go back down in size.) it was only later I learned the truth.

I was pushed to leave the hospital the day after this all happened and thought I may have been able to finally go on with my life, having nightmares about what happened but still move on.

My son was born so quickly that he was bruised and had ruptured blood vessels in his eyes. I cried every time I looked him. I told them I birth quickly and wanted to be in a more controlled environment but no one listened.

Still this horror experience was far from over.

Less than a week after giving birth I could not walk, could not hold or pick up my baby and was in extreme agony. Back to the SAME hospital we went where I had a nurse sniff my pad and tell me it smelt ok so there was no infection. After having a blood test that couldn't have been more wrong. I not only had an infection which I know was a direct cause of my manual placenta removal, it had gone to my blood stream and was turning to sepsis. I was once again admitted where I was told I just had to wait for the doctor to do an emergency cesarean before I could get the antibiotics needed to clear the infection.

I was placed in a room with 2 other beds. There I was left with my newborn, no bed for him so he had to sleep on the bed with me. I still could not lift him and once they put the cannula in my hand everything became impossible. I was offered no assistance from the nurses (except 1, who when she was on shift was always there to help me). I had nurses get angry when I advocated for myself and told them that they could not push the antibiotics through faster because I was going to be on it for an extended period of time. If my son needed changing I had to work it all out on my own and was treated as an inconvenience for being there. Once again they could not wait to get me out and after 2 days on a drip they sent me home with oral antibiotics and no direction that all of this would affect my milk supply as I was breastfeeding. I only got to feed my son for 6 weeks because my supply did not recover from all the stress my body had been through.

4 months later I found myself back in hospital with doctors thinking I had appendicitis. Upon looking they found that it was scar tissue from the infection I had. Another course of antibiotics and my body seem to respond.

I now have extremely painful periods that cripple me with all the pain coming from the area I had the infection. I will now have to live with this until I can find a gynaecologist that will do a hysterectomy on a 33 year old woman.

I also had to go through a full cycle of IVF to have my last baby because I now have fertility issues. Whilst we are unsure exactly what caused this it has come on since I had my traumatic birth.

My mental health has also suffered as a result and upon advocating to go to a different hospital for my last birth I was informed it wasn't a good enough reason to use an out of zone hospital and once again found myself back at the same hospital. My mental health score was so high that I was just points away from them admitting me to the psych ward and when I explained why the very first midwife I seen told me that the hospital played no fault in that and when I questioned if this all could of been avoided had I just been given antibiotics straight after the manual removal of my placenta she brushed me off and dismissed anything I had to say.

I do say all the other midwife's I had were amazing and I had a wonderful recovery birth, but that was due to the midwife I ended up with who listened to everything I had to say and took all my wishes into account. There needs to be more midwife's like her that show empathy and listen to what the women need in a time that can be traumatic or a beautiful experience.