

Submission
No 33

INQUIRY INTO BIRTH TRAUMA

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Partially
Confidential

In 2011 I was an expecting first time mum. I was 18 at the time and was treated so poorly that it has resulted in 12 years of therapy due to diagnosed PTSD and post natal depression.

Initially on admission to the antenatal clinic at _____ hospital the midwife changed my due dates even though my LMP was accurate due to the size of the baby at my 12 week scan. This happened again at my 20 week scan. My due date went from the 8th of February to the 24th of February.

During my pregnancy I voiced numerous times that I was experiencing severe itching to the antenatal clinic midwife that I was experiencing severe itching to the point that I was getting in showers so hot that I'd burn my skin in an attempt to take the itching away. They didn't do any investigative blood work however found out some time after my pregnancy that I had obstetric cholestasis.

Towards the end of my pregnancy they refused to use my LMP date regardless of the fact that I was measuring that date according to the measurement taken from your stomach. Pregnancy became so hard towards the end. I ended up going into hospital with severe back pain and vomiting. The older midwife on treated me horrendously and commented on my age. They discharged me telling me that pregnancy is hard towards the end, again - no testing was done.

On the 20th of February my body finally took over and I went in to labour. The midwives I had on the day were very supportive however the events that occurred on the day were appalling. I was given an epidural from an under skilled registrar during my labour. He failed to explain the procedure and attempted to place the epidural 6 times with me screaming on the last attempts they worked out I was feeling the whole procedure. The midwife intervened and I was given a specialist to complete the procedure who had it done painlessly within minutes.

As the day went on following the epidural attempts, a midwife presented in my room with scrubs for my partner at the time to put on. I was confused by this as the baby was doing well on the monitor and I was also tracking along ok. I was told that I'd been labouring for a long time and the theatre teams were going home so I'd it had been decided that I would go for a c section as it looked like it was heading that way due to me being a smaller sized person and the size of my stomach been so large.

I refused to go and was told that if I hadn't given birth by the time they had finished the other patients c section they would be coming for me next.

Luckily I had reached full dilation during that time and when they came back to get me I was actively pushing. My baby was born and was placed on my chest. It wasn't long before I started to haemorrhage and he was rushed to NICU due to his breathing. I was unable to see him for several hours.

When I was transferred to the ward, I had a catheter insitu due to haemorrhaging and the risk of requiring surgery, I was left with my baby alone. I buzzed once during the night and was ridiculed and asked why I could not get up myself to get the baby out of his crib. It was then I attempted to stand up and blood immediately drenched my clothes and the floor.

Upon going home I felt completely deflated, I could not stop re-living the birth - I could not stop crying and I wanted nothing to do with my baby.

I did alarm the child health nurse who visited me once of my feelings, I was told it was normal. It wasn't until admission to a sleep school I was told it wasn't and that I needed to go for a de-brief with the hospital.

I agreed to this and was shown the notes from my midwife on the day who I absolutely could not fault. We were both shocked to learn that my anaesthetic notes were missing from my file as well as my medications.

There was NO record of me having an epidural that day nor was there a record of any of the medications I had including blood products.

I did ask her at the time if she'd believed the record had disappeared so that I couldn't take legal action on the anaesthetist and she stated she did not know but it did seem like a coincidence.

It wasn't until my second pregnancy that it was realised I had suffered through my first pregnancy with obstetric cholestasis (I had it every pregnancy) the complications of obstetric cholestasis are risk of haemorrhage and breathing difficulties in the newborn, in worst cases it can lead to still birth.

Had I received the care I was entitled to without judgement from the beginning. I would have had my baby safely and potentially not suffered through 12 years of mental health issues. They are 12 years I cannot get back and 12 years of fractured bond that my son and I have to continue on working through. All thanks to negligent staff.