

Submission
No 58

INQUIRY INTO BIRTH TRAUMA

Name: Ellie Sullivan

Date Received: 19 July 2023

Partially
Confidential

hospital - birth date 21/11/22

This was my second baby and I was in the midwife program with hospital. My midwife was changed in the last 3 weeks of my pregnancy. I had 2 Stretch and sweeps done as I was feeling overwhelmed and sore with back pain and emotionally ready to have the baby. The baby's size was not picked up (4.64kg) in the measurements made even though I was told the midwife sweeper entirely around the baby's head. If I had known the size I would have liked to take the option of a cesarean due to previous birth trauma with getting an episiotomy with no pain relief.

I told my midwife of my traumatic past birth

Story and said I would really like a epidural as I was extremely anxious.

She believed if I came early enough it wouldn't be a problem.

Upon getting my second painful contraction at home I called the midwife and left for the hospital immediately.

When arriving at the hospital the midwife asked if I still wanted an epidural and I said please, so she sent for one even though I was not checked to see how dilated I was (the whole time before giving birth)

By the time the anesthesiologist came he got me in position and wiped my back as I was having a contraction. In the contraction I said I needed to push and he said it was too late, by the time it kicks in the baby would be out.

This all of a sudden really frightened me that I would have to feel what I felt with the last birth.

The pushing went for longer then expected due to the size of her and a different midwife said this is your last try to push otherwise we will have to intervene.

Finally I pushed her out which soon after put my body into shock and started uncontrollably shaking.

Once the placenta was out the midwife was saying the sack started to come apart from placenta after birth. This was not documented nor explained to me the repercussions of an incomplete placenta.

I had to wait 2.5 hours after the birth before having the surgeon come to do my stitches, in this time I was not given any pain relief even though I was in extreme pain. I had a hematoma un noticed the size of an orange just inside my vagina which was found by the doctor doing the stitches. There was lack of care/compassion and any bedside manner from him and as I cried and asked him to be more gentle as I could feel the stitches being done and his reply was look I can be done in 10 minutes or you can go to theatre, without your baby. The stitches took over an hour due to the hematoma.

Even though I was given the choice to go to theatre I was also told it would take 10 minutes which was not true. When talking to my midwife after she said she thought I needed to go to theatre.

In the birth suite my baby was making a grunting sound which my midwife laughed and said she sounded like a little piggy. This was then brought to my attention by another midwife after being taken to the ward and left with her was that she was having difficulty with breathing.

She was rushed to the NICU with my husband where her lips had started to go blue by the time she got in there.

She was put on the CPAP and multiple tests done on her. My baby had 9 cannula attempts on her in her stay.

One nurse with shakey hands was joking that it was from too much coffee.

On her stay in NICU my husband the baby's father noticed the CPAP/high flow machine at one point the tube was not even plugged in.

After 5 days of stay in the hospital I was sent home despite still bleeding quite a bit.

I was given 5 endone tablets to take home which was no where near enough for the pain I was still in.

When my midwife came for my home visit she witnessed what was thought to be the sac/membrane coming out of my vagina with still no mention of the repercussions

-haemorrhage

-infection

She told me to try pull it out which it broke at the opening.

More sac came out after my midwife left - bleeding subsided after that for a few days.

Thursday night and Friday night more big bleeds- which I called midwife who said to go into the birthing suite to have an assessment done.

They did bedside ultrasound which showed blood in the uterus but needed a more thorough scan to see if placenta was retained.

They said they couldn't guarantee if I was admitted that I would be seen for an ultrasound until after the weekend and that I would be better off going home and organising one myself.

The referral they gave me was for a clinic that is Monday to Friday.

Ultrasound on Tuesday showed something

And the midwife said she would get the doctors to call me with options Tuesday arvo. they didn't.

Wednesday arvo I called midwife who put me on the phone to - doctor who did my stitches.

He said ultrasound is not concerning- not sure if it is tissue (could be blood clots)

Doesn't feel need to do a D n C

Also shouldn't do one as I have infection which was picked up in a swab they did on Friday night - no one notified me of this infection ? What if I was to go elsewhere and they didn't know?

With infection chances are it can spread through my pelvis if a d n c is done.

Doctor could not see notes from midwife home check that there was membranes coming out .

I booked to see gynaecologist Monday 12th, and called on the Thursday before saying they are cancelling the appointment as he is on leave, and that they will get another gynaecologist to look over my notes tomorrow and reschedule an appointment

The new gyno did not call on the Friday.

The midwife got her manager to call me.@I

She said I can try and get you an appointment with a gyno however I don't know if you will get in this year.

I asked what the next steps are? My antibiotics course was finished and my blood changed from a pink/ brown colour to a bright red.

She said I can come into the birthing suite to get my bloods done again to see if there is infection present still.

So I went back to the hospital and got my bloods done again, the manager met me at birth suite and went through everything with me. Apologised for my traumatic birth and gave me the steps if I wanted to make a complaint.

My bloods came back clear, so a D and C was not necessary. I went to a gynaecologist at hospital which was organised by a family friend which he said that my pelvic floor muscle on one side had been torn and would take exercises and time to heal and function normally again.

This experience has scared me from having another child even though in my heart my family is not yet complete.

I hope sharing my experience helps the system improve its care for women giving birth, as I would hate for anyone to go through what I did.