

Submission  
No 94

## INQUIRY INTO BIRTH TRAUMA

**Name:** Mrs Dulce Munoz

**Date Received:** 24 July 2023

---

Partially  
Confidential

My name is Dulce Carolina Munoz Garcia, I gave birth to my daughter 30/11/2010 at the Hospital after 72 hours of pre labor that ended with a life saving emergency C section, from which I am eternally grateful, and an anxiety disorder with lifelong consequences.

I had a healthy and "normal" pregnancy, on my 20 week scans we discovered that my baby had Talipes (club foot) and a note was made to file, although scary after a bit of googling I felt in control and supported.

I didn't have any signs of diabetes or other pregnancy related complications, on the night of the 27/11/2010 I started with mild contractions, went to the hospital and was sent home as my dilation was minimal, for the next 60 hours I was in and out of the maternity ward, during this time rashes appeared all over my body, and an allergy like reaction was making my face swollen, when I was finally admitted to the ward I was experiencing a lot of pain and I was told in multiple occasions that it was completely normal but something was wrong.

I got an epidural and my waters were manually broken, then a change of midwives happened and was in this point when something wrong really happened, I felt extremely tired and my mother noticed that the baby heart rate was dropping, she told my partner who called the attention of the midwives, my baby was in complete distress and I was rushed in for a C Section.

The last thing I remember a mobile phone ringing, was born in less than 3 minutes according to the report I was rush into surgery and woke up hours after that.

When I woke up, my was so confused, disoriented just remembered that my baby's heart rate was weak and that I was rushed to C Section, I was sure the worst had happened I asked the nurses about my baby but they told me they didn't have any information. In order to protect me, my brain created a narrative in which my baby died.

At that moment I went through all the scenarios including living a lifetime without my child.

When I saw my daughter in the arms of my mother I honestly think I went mad, my brain couldn't put together anything and I thought, I believed that the baby my mother was holding was not my child. It took hours for me to put things together.

I also had to deal with a body that was reacting to something- I had a full on allergic reaction to childbirth my face was swollen, rashes all over my body and I was in so much pain from the C-section, the worst part was the anxiety.

I kept hearing mobile phone ring and thinking that my child could have died at any moment, it took years for me to be able to talk about this night.

There are three things that went wrong that night,

- 1- As a person of colour with an accent who looked younger than I was with a "normal" pregnancy medical story. - was dismissed by a the hospital staff
- 2- Nurses and staff at the recovery ward were poorly trained about childbirth trauma.
- 3- There was an animosity between doctors and midwives during the last part of my labor, midwives were pushing for a natural birth doctors for a medical birth.

My life has been mark by my traumatic childbirth experience and so much positive outcomes including my work, I work with young mothers and mothers to be from refugee, asylum seeker backgrounds, a lot of them with very similar experiences.

I was young brown immigrant mother who was dismissed with very serious consequences for the rest of my life, including anxiety disorder, postnatal depression, PTSD.

It is for all these consequences that I made the decision of not having another child.

For all the incredible work our Health system there is still an underlying racism in the way we treat people.