

Submission  
No 115

## INQUIRY INTO BIRTH TRAUMA

**Name:** Name suppressed

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Partially  
Confidential

My name is \_\_\_\_\_, I'm 28 years old and live in \_\_\_\_\_. I moved to the \_\_\_\_\_ in 2020 for work with my partner \_\_\_\_\_ and we bought a house here in 2021. This is our first and likely only baby after my experience with antenatal care at \_\_\_\_\_ Hospital.

At 19 weeks pregnant I suffered a large bleed. I presented to the birthing unit for monitoring and I was grateful for their assistance when I was under the 20 weeks threshold. However my positive feelings with my prenatal care end there.

On this visit at 19 weeks I undertook much testing to rule out a variety of conditions which could possibly be causing this bleed. On this day, I had a doctor tell me before physically carrying out a Pap smear that should the results return as cancerous, I would need to terminate to commence treatment. My partner stepped in - "mate, you haven't even done the swab yet, should you really start throwing around cancer and termination before you have any idea if that's necessary?" - the doctor was taken aback and did his swab and off he went. My partner and I, new parents, just being told that and left to our own devices. We were both obviously shattered. Shortly after this, another doctor came in to have a look at my cervix which I consented to. However this exam they inserted metal tongs (?) into my vagina and I'm not sure what they did as nothing was explained to me and caused me so much pain I threw up. This marked the start of my journey.

I was made to wait 2.5 weeks for the results of the Pap smear which I was warned could result in me needing to terminate my pregnancy. When we returned for those results, I had to ask the doctor I saw for the results as they didn't even bring them up. I'd cried myself to sleep for 2 weeks and missed 3 days of work from stress for results so minor to the doctors that they weren't even discussed. Just an "oh yeah all clear" when questioned. Unfortunately for me on this day a follow up vaginal exam showed bleeding. I was admitted to hospital for observations.

At 8am the following day, when I'd had no scans or any testing done, a doctor came around and I was furious that I'd been admitted for bleeding and had nothing done so far. When I said to the doctor I wanted to be discharged, and what was I doing in hospital if they're not investigating the bleeding, was smugly met with "so you want to risk your pregnancy?" I hit back with "if anyone is risking my pregnancy doctor it's you and this hospital for not getting to the cause of the bleeding 2 and a half weeks ago when I first presented." This was poorly received, and I believe that this is the reason that it then took another 9 hours before I had an ultrasound. At 8pm that night I discharged myself as I was no longer bleeding and felt I was being treated disrespectfully and nothing done to monitor my baby anyway. I went home and came back for the results the following week which were all clear.

I had to have ongoing monitoring from this bleeding and an incorrect entry on my initial file that I am a smoker which I am not. My discharge paperwork says I am a smoker and then says baby is discharged into a smoke free home. All in all I was out of pocket \$695 in my pregnancy for scans.

Towards the end of my pregnancy the doctors found something to try to admit me over every week. I suffer horrifically from white coat syndrome now and would refuse my blood pressure being taken every visit as my blood pressure was through the roof at every recording of it. One doctor didn't listen to my requests, and I had a high blood pressure reading. It took 45 minutes of arguing and flat out refusing to be admitted before an alternate plan to check for pre eclampsia was made. They were insistent. I was to stay. I told them they'd need to strap me down and lock me in a room cause I was not staying and that what they were doing was making my blood pressure worse. Well guess what. No pre eclampsia. When a midwife I trusted who I had developed rapport with over my pregnancy took my blood pressure it was perfect because I trusted her however that good reading didn't outweigh the 1 bad one I'd had. The did bloods and I told them to call me if I had any indicators of pre eclampsia- I wasn't staying to be forgotten about for over 24 hours over nothing again.

At 36 weeks and 4 days I had a scan which showed abnormal dopplers. This scan was to follow up low amniotic fluid, the scan which showed low amniotic fluid was to follow up babies head measuring too big in relation to her body, that scan was to follow up her belly measuring too big in relation to her head, and that scan was to follow up her being too small in general.... So every scan was to clear up something (that never got mentioned again unless I asked) but found something else. I would throw up and cry before every scan waiting to hear what was wrong this week. What's abnormal dopplers? We asked. "The blood flow in your babies brain is wrong. We're admitting you. See you." In a room in maternity we went with no explanation. I was so hysterical that my partner called my mum who demanded a doctor come and see us and explain. My appointment was at 2 and I didn't see a doctor who explained properly until 10:30 at night. My partner was supposed to leave at 8- I was still hysterically crying by this point. Thankfully he could stay until a doctor came and explained that it's near impossible to get these readings right this late in pregnancy, don't stress, we just want the ctg to ensure babies in no distress...

The morning doctors came around and recommended induction. I took the option. I couldn't face the hospital anymore. I will never have another baby at \_\_\_\_\_ - I will lie and say I live elsewhere. I am so scared of the hospital that I can't get off the highway at Figtree. I dream often about being told I need to terminate my baby and my perfectly healthy bubba being induced at 19 weeks because I might have cancer but can't prove it. Baby had an awful reaction to her vaccines and her temperature was near 40 degrees and I have such little trust in the hospital that I couldn't take her there. I am fearful of what they would say to me to scare me if I took her there.

I complained about my treatment mid pregnancy. I was told I'd only see 1 doctor moving forward. That happened 1 time before I went back to seeing whatever doctor was on at the time of my appointment.

I can't see a solution to this issue as it is so ingrained in the way the doctors operate there. I am fearful for the next woman who gives birth there. I will never forgive the doctors at \_\_\_\_\_ hospital for making my first pregnancy such a fraught and terrifying time for

absolutely no reason. I gave birth to a perfectly healthy baby, yet every week for 18 weeks (19 weeks- 37 weeks when I gave birth) they made me believe my baby was in grave danger and something was wrong with her. I'm furious and disgusted still that they have made me so scared that I might never be able to have another baby again out of fear.