

Submission
No 127

INQUIRY INTO BIRTH TRAUMA

Name: Name suppressed

Date Received: 30 July 2023

Partially
Confidential

Gave birth at NSW public hospital

Prenatal, birthing and postnatal care all at the same place.

From the start our due dates changed and they eventually stated that our daughter was small for gestation size. The rest of the ultrasounds (fortnightly) throughout were considered "normal" until the 36 week scan were they said the flow from the placentas were failing and that I had to be induced on Friday (in 2 days time and she would be 37 weeks gestation).

There was one repeat ultrasound on the same day and that was it. Throughout my prenatal care I saw a different midwife and doctor every time.

The induction process was awful. The hospital was short staffed and I had many interruptions to my labour making it hard to focus. I was unable to have a shower or bath due to being in mandatory CTG. I was made to feel that the induction was mandatory. After I question why didn't I get a repeat ultrasound, why was I not offered alternate choices like stay and observe in hospital or c-section.

Induction was prolonged (16.5 hrs from start of labour inducing medication) I asked for an epidural due to increasing pain and exhaustion. The midwife didn't speak with the anaesthetist (she was a new grade and we got the impression she didn't want to page him??). When I did get the epidural it did not work and he ignored me. He eventually came back at agreed it did not work and gave me a different medication which worked. Our daughter ended up in foetal distressed and her heart rate went up. The medical team decided to give me 2 hours to push or they would do a suction. No discussion with me (not that I was in state to understand) or my husband, again it was more told what they are going to do and what I'm allowed to do. She ended up being birthed via suction and I had to have an episiotomy. I had her for 10 seconds then she was pulled from me and they tried to revive her with the neo puff then all the Drs rushed in and took her away with my husband. Leaving me by my self in my room alone, exhausted and scared. It was awful. I was later told there was nothing with my placenta.

In NICU she was intubated, 3 x heart wholes, jaundice before 24 hrs. Had to have IV antibiotics, an arterial line and NGT. I was not allowed to touch or hold her for 4 days. And she wasn't allowed to be fed. She was under developed but a good weight (2.8kg and her ultrasound stated 2.2kg) she need the get the lung surfactant.

Things I wish I had differently:

- continuity of care. I wish I could have discussed with the same midwife what I would have wanted during each scenario so that they could have advocated for me
- I wish I had a repeat ultrasound to confirm the placenta was failing
- I wish I had advocated for myself and insisted my due date be changed based off of when I thought she was conceived. I think she was born at 36 weeks old
- I wish I was given the option to have a c section instead of induction if she really had to be delivered early.

Postnatal care

This sucked. Although I did get my own room on the ward, it was so heart breaking hearing the other babies cry and watching their mums comfort them and hold them. I was very angry and sad.

Nicu

Their care was patchy. Some nurses were very kind, caring and considerate. Other nurses were short, understaffed and rude. With certain nurses they would ask I get a chair my self to sit by my daughter and other nurses would get cranky if I went and got my own chair, requesting I don't take the ward property. I would get mixed messages of what I was "allowed to do". I had to ask permission to hold her (which I understand because she was so sick and had so many tubes) but it messed with my binding because I felt like she wasn't mine. They didn't change my daughters NGT and she developed a pressure area injury which they later blamed in her scratching herself.

Once she was well enough and transferred to special nursery, we felt neglected by the staff and the communication was poor.