

Submission
No 142

INQUIRY INTO BIRTH TRAUMA

Name: Name suppressed

Date Received: 1 August 2023

Partially
Confidential

Student midwife birth trauma story: one of my continuity women was anxious from the very first appointment we had together in early pregnancy about pain in labour but I reassured her we have options for that and we will support her to be able to labour with pain relief.

At 41+3 she begins to labour. After 6 hours of early labour she comes to the hospital not coping with the pain. She requested pain relief, was told you're in early labour would you consider morphine. She agreed. After 4 hours she was in pain again, there were no staff to facilitate a 1:1 labour so she couldn't have an epidural yet which she was requesting, another dose of morphine is given instead.

Again 4 hours later no staff to do epi so more morphine. 3 doses of morphine later, 1.5 hours of an unanswered nurse call bell and she was distraught. Doctor offered her a caesarean she said yes as she had no faith anyone would get her an epidural which she had now been waiting over 15 hours for. No fault of the anaesthetist but the spinal for her caesarean didn't work down her right side so had to have a general anaesthetic for her caesarean. Due to 3 Morphine doses, almost 24 hours of labour and a GA she took 4 hours to recover and did not get skin to skin.

Her baby did not breast feed for over a week and she was traumatised by her birth as was I. Perhaps becoming a midwife is not for me if we cannot support women to have beautiful natural births due to staff shortages and hospital policies.