

Submission
No 170

INQUIRY INTO BIRTH TRAUMA

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Partially
Confidential

In December 2019 I had an unwanted, unplanned caesarean at _____ hospital. I believe that my naivety from being a first time mum was completely taken advantage of to further the hospital system's agenda of making labour and birth as quick and easy for them to manage as possible. This was also between Christmas and new years which I believe contributed to the hospitals actions

At about 40 weeks was coerced into an induction at 41 weeks by the midwife there, who gave me absolutely no information about the risks or benefits. I believe this was not what informed consent is defined as - because I was given no information, and my emotions were manipulated: the midwife said "I can see in your eyes you want this baby out". I had absolutely no complications or reasons for concern.

A doctor that barely looked at me let alone spoke to me came in to check my cervix to see if it needed cervidil. Consent wasn't requested properly in my opinion, he just said "I'm going to..." and then proceeded to do it. This was incredibly rough and painful and the doctor had zero empathy or bedside manner whatsoever. My cervix was closed so the cervidil was inserted.

I began having contractions overnight which because fairly uncomfortable. The routine procedure was to bring me in to birth suite at 8am to break waters and have the syntocinon. Not once was I given any information about why they were doing these things, the risks to my baby (which I now know are numerous) or any description of what to expect. My contractions were excruciating immediately, and the breaking of the waters was extremely painful and scary. I look back and realise I was not given any information or opportunity to ask questions or potentially question whether the procedures were necessary.

I was in so much pain that I couldn't move off the bed, feeling paralysed, screaming. No support was given by the hospital staff, my husband was left to try and support me on his own. Neither of us were prepared for the level of pain I was experiencing.

The midwife realised that my baby's heart rate was decreasing on the syntocinon drip, which they did explain to me, but they didn't want to turn it off as I "wouldn't progress". I had only been having contractions for about 6 hours at this point. I felt like I was dying, screaming during back to back contractions, crying and feeling so unsupported.

The midwife offered me an epidural, saying that the labour would have a long way to go because I was "only 3cm". I had no emotional support from the staff, nor did they try and help me get into positions to support progression of labour.

Because the baby's heart rate was decelerating, they decided to bring the doctor in to discuss caesarean. This was at 4pm and the pressure was put on me to decide right then as there (I

since realise it is because they were rostered to go home, and there is no 24 hour theatre team at the hospital, they have to be on call). They framed this as “your baby is in danger, we would recommend caesarean” while standing over me on the bed. Not once did they mention that all the interventions and the awful environment I was in was likely the reason for the baby’s distress.

After my baby was born in theatre, they let me see her but I couldn’t have skin to skin and they took her away and separated us for an hour. This in particular was incredibly traumatic for me. I was shaking, scared and sad - I wanted to see my baby.

I was left in recover with staff that had no empathy about the situation, they were laughing about a tv show they watched. Nobody cares I was unnecessarily separated from my baby. This led to so much grief and trauma that I decided to have a Homebirth for my second, which was a beautiful, polar opposite experience.

The routine unnecessary inductions and interventions, plus the coercion and emotional manipulation the staff in these hospitals are forced to use is absolutely disgusting when compared with the care every woman and her family deserves to receive at such a sacred and transformative time in their lives.