

Submission
No 188

INQUIRY INTO BIRTH TRAUMA

Name: Name suppressed

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Partially
Confidential

I am a midwife and childbirth educator. I have seen women have episiotomies performed by registrar obstetricians without consent being asked or when women have explicitly said they do not want an episiotomy. I have also witnessed consultant obstetricians coerce women in to consenting to have an episiotomy and then cut the perineum multiple times, almost in a hacking style, while performing a ventouse birth. This has occurred on more than one occasion by a particular obstetrician, I hold a lot of shame that I didn't feel strong enough to stand up for these women.

On one occasion I had a registrar, via the consultant, bully me in to performing an artificial rupture of membranes, when it was not clinically indicated. This caused fetal heart rate deceleration and in turn resulting in a ventouse birth and the woman experiencing a panic attack during the birth and shortly after. She also had a horrific episiotomy which extended to the buttocks performed by the consultant. This birth stayed with me for a very long time and has made me fearful in the birth space.

The ever increasing medicalisation of pregnancy and birth makes being a midwife increasingly difficult and unenjoyable.

Women aren't being adequately counselled about what an induction is and that sometimes it doesn't work.

Hospital policies that don't promote physiology are also challenging. for example, having to constantly checking baby's blood sugars and forcing formula on babies where the mother is wanting to exclusively breastfeed and separating mothers and babies is also incredibly difficult.

In my role as a childbirth educator I have had women come to me after their birth and describe how things happened to them without consent and they describe being coerced in to things that they didn't want.