

Submission
No 194

INQUIRY INTO BIRTH TRAUMA

Name: Name suppressed

Date Received: 2 August 2023

Partially
Confidential

My name is _____, I'm 36 and live in _____, NSW. I have a 5 month old baby. I gave birth at _____ Hospital in _____ 2023. My waters broke 48 hours before I presented to the hospital in active labour, I'd been monitored at the hospital a couple of times throughout that time. When I presented, the doctor on duty strongly pushed an induction to speed things up (synthetic oxytocin - syntocinon) and antibiotics to prevent infection. We declined both, we had done our research and knew that despite many hospitals having this as policy, there is no evidence of increased risk to the baby for up to 72 hours after a premature rupture of membranes.

We wanted a natural, physiological birth and as far as we know, the doctor never asked about or saw our birth plan. The doctor returned regularly with escalating pressure to comply and saying we were risking sepsis and infant mortality, despite the midwives regularly reassuring us that both the baby and I were doing really well. The doctor's pressure was stressful and included talking to me while I was contracting and after I had asked could she please speak only to my partner so I could stay focussed on the labour.

At the end of her shift she tried to get my partner to sign a 'refusing medical advice' form, which he found incredibly stressful as he didn't feel he could read the fine print while trying to support me. We know that stress prevents labour from progressing and feel this doctor's conduct played a role in the labour taking 20 hours from the time of arrival at the hospital. It seems that this hospital (and many others) have policies in place which are not evidence-based and feel a review of policies concerning birth is essential in ensuring birthing people experience less trauma.