

INQUIRY INTO BIRTH TRAUMA

Name: Name suppressed

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Partially
Confidential

Hi,

I saw in the news that there have been complaints about birth experiences at _____ hospital, and I also have some moderately serious things from my experience there in 2015 that I hope won't happen in future to others.

The doctor who came in at the end of the birth process was professional and I think he probably made the right call about episiotomy and vacuum delivery. So I don't have any complaints about the method of delivery, but there were some upsetting things about the care before and after.

I felt that the nurses were annoyed at how long the birth was taking, as if they just wanted to leave, but in retrospect that lack of warmth in itself was probably stalling the labour. One was sarcastic when I asked if I could take the gas into the bathroom when she told me to go there and try to push on the toilet for a short time, during labour. They also disregarded aspects of my birth plan without at all discussing the reasons with me or my family who were there. They just acted against what I'd written without talking about it, even though we had given them the plan at the time.

I also don't know if it was right of them to tell me when to push, without encouraging me to try to feel the timing myself.

After the birth, my child needed a urine test and the social worker told me that they would try to do a catch in her nappy. What actually happened was that they didn't even try to do that, and a junior nurse was trying to insert a tube while my child was distressed, he said he wasn't sure whether it was the right size or in the right place, and all the while the paediatrician was taking phone calls.

We also had to return a few days after being sent home, and were placed in a group room with an incredibly loud snorer, even though I was sleep deprived and trying to adjust to getting my newborn to sleep.

One other thing was that the nurse who came to our place to help me with follow up care taught us to cot settle without making eye contact or picking the baby up, for however long it would take for them to stop crying, which wasn't appropriate especially for a newborn and added to the confusing, conflicting advice we were receiving from nurses.

Actually I think that the prenatal classes should address the controversies about how to care for a newborn, so that parents aren't left having to research so much in the early weeks after birth.

There were some very kind nurses and lots of good things about the care we received too, especially the safe delivery. But all these things do add up to a feeling of birth trauma, even though it was less extreme than some others' experiences. I hope that these sorts of things can be avoided in future.

Thanks,