

Submission
No 269

INQUIRY INTO BIRTH TRAUMA

Name: Name suppressed

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Partially
Confidential

My first baby at Hospital in 2018.

My baby was born via vacuum delivery after a long labour starting at 3am and he was born at 12.01 the following day. During this time I wasn't offered any food or drink. I was feeling very weak. So by the time I went to push, the nurses and the doctors were telling me to push. They were counting 1, 2, 3 push. They would say to my husband in your language to push. But I was talking to them in English, and they were telling me that I don't understand. They assumed I didn't understand English even though I was talking to them. I felt ignored that they were not talking to me. I felt....

You have one more go, if I fail they will do an emergency CS because they couldn't see the head of the baby.

My husband said please try and push. But I was too weak to push because I hadn't eaten for at least 21 hours.

At the front desk they asked me if I wanted to do a normal birth, not a CS and I said natural.

They then said they were going to vacuum out the baby but they did not tell me what the procedure was or what a vacuum was.

I then pushed and they used the vacuum and the baby came out.

I was worried about the head shape because I was worried about whether the vacuum affected the head shape.

I later Googled what a vacuum delivery was because I wasn't given the information.

What I wished they could offer food and drink during the labour to avoid the labouring woman getting weak. They should listen to the woman who is labouring if she wants to eat and drink.

I wished that they talked to me directly instead of my husband.

My second birth was in 2022.

I experienced a traumatic birth for many reasons.

I was in a room that had more space and room to be active and walk around and the shower in the room helped. I also learnt from my first birth that I need food. So I took my food in and my drink which helped with my energy levels.

The birth was fine but they took away my baby when they were born because they were worried about their breathing and weren't happy with the crying. I was scary because they took the baby to the cot and about 8 doctors surrounded him and they took him away. The problem was they didn't communicate whether he was okay or not. A nurse came later and told me what was going on and to keep me company.

The worst thing about my birth experience was when I was being stitched up. The doctor asked me to lift my legs onto the support but I was in too much pain and couldn't do it. He said 'I You have to try'. He offered me gas and I used that which helped me lift my legs. When he started stitching I was in so much pain that I moaned and cried out. I told him it was too painful and that I could feel everything. He said multiple times ' , I think you are being dramatic', ' I think you're exaggerating' and he then said "You are using too much gas" so they turned the gas off. I couldn't believe it because it was making a difference. He then asked me if I had been sexually abused, which was shocking. Why did he ask that?

I could feel every single stitch. I told him "I am traumatised". He ignored me. He did not offer to numb the area after I asked so many times. I was screaming in pain. There were two other people in the room. I had never met any of these people, the doctor or the nurses.

It was horrible. After he finished stitching me up they all left and closed the door. I kept screaming and moaning because I was still in so much pain. About 10 minutes later, one of the nurses came back in and gave me pain relief.

If they had told me that they were going to give me this straight after, it could have helped my psychological state, it could have given me hope that the pain would be addressed.

I felt so traumatised that I did not want to see my baby or hold my baby. I thought to myself, how can I look after my baby, how can I look after myself. I worried that I wouldn't be able to heal physically or emotionally.

Later I was eager to see my baby and I was taken to see him and I felt connected now with my baby.

What I wished had happened: The doctor was not using harsh words, not believing me, I wish he could have listened to me, if he could have offered me pain relief or an injection to numb my body.

The impact of this trauma of my second birth is not really feeling confident or wanting another baby. I do not want to go through the same thing again. If I have someone to be my support through pregnancy, birth and after birth that is something I would really like to do.

I was told about the program where you have one midwife support you the whole way through and I would really like to do that if I have another child. I also found out of the possibility to homebirth. This also sounds good that there is another option.