

Submission
No 286

INQUIRY INTO BIRTH TRAUMA

Name: Name suppressed

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Partially
Confidential

I experienced birth trauma in April 2021. I still find it extremely difficult to talk about, hence the last minute submission. I can't even easily articulate it in words

Key points of my trauma-

No continuity of care.

Extremely biased viewpoint from GP for model of care. Did not explain the care models clearly or positives and negatives. As a result of this and having no friends who were pregnant or given birth yet, I went with shared care model. I did not realise until it was too late, that this would impact my birth experience so strongly. Not knowing midwives or doctors. Feeling conflicted with what the hospital midwives said vs GP said.

When I had premature rupture membranes at 37w3d, I did not have the results of my GBS swab. The Dr at the hospital did not give me any information or discussion re induction. -Told-me she would be back in 40 mins to start. It was only another dr who came after that that explained everything in its entirety. I still didn't feel as though I had a choice or a say to not be induced and on antibiotics.

Baby experienced feral distress and turned posterior mid labour. I believe as a result of the induction.

Two failed vaccums to turn. Forceps delivery with episiotomy. Nearly 2.5 years later I still have pain around the episiotomy site.

My baby ended up in special care nursery within 12 hours. We spent 6 days in hospital.

The public hospital, _____ does not allow for partners to spend the night. The trauma I experienced, from my baby being in the special care nursery and being alone in the hospital room that night after the traumatic birth was indescribably horrific. I will never forget it, and I will never be able to set foot in that maternity ward ever again, if we choose to have another child.

The treatment of the night midwives once my baby was out for SCN was scary. I felt like a bother that I couldn't stop my baby screaming and crying. I couldn't put him down without him crying. I couldn't swaddle him correctly. He wouldn't feed easily. I was terrified to ring the buzzer for help. There was no sympathy or affection or comfort.

Before my baby was taken to the nursery, a midwife insisted that he needed formula feed because he was crying. Not offering to help with breastfeeding as I wished. Very rude and abrupt and again, didn't offer any emotional support. Especially as I was by myself as my husband had to leave with visiting hours.

Once out of the hospital, we continued to have breastfeeding challenges. My GP and nurse at that office, said I should give up trying after 5 weeks. "I had to do the same". Again, not respecting my strong feelings and need to persevere and find the cause of the feeding challenges.

The GP said "at least he's alive, I had a patient this morning who had a still born". This was not what any mother should hear. I did not need the guilt of this other unknown women, lumped onto me when I was so severely struggling.

I have been seeing a specialist perinatal psychologist since my son was born until now, almost 2.5 years as a result of all of this. The healthcare, maternity system needs to change. I still feel physically and emotionally unready to have another child yet, going against our original plans to have a smaller age gap.

Future mothers need guidance at the very very early stages of pregnancy about models of care. Public hospitals need to recognise the need to allow partners to stay with the mother and newborn. Especially first time mothers. Doctors need educating on how they speak to mothers at a crucial time. There needs to be more up to date clinical policies in hospitals, based on actual relevant recent research. The statistics show the rates of intervention have increased, yet no decrease in mortality rates. Yet, increases in birth trauma.

Private midwives need to be more easily and financially accessible. This needs to be funded by the government to allow women greater choice and control with their birth. And the continuity of care this can provide. I hate that after my experience in a public hospital, I am likely to need to save up so much money to afford a private midwife so I can give birth again without reliving the trauma.

Something needs to change. I wouldn't wish my experience on my worst enemy. I hope that one day I can move past it and have a different experience