

Submission
No 364

INQUIRY INTO BIRTH TRAUMA

Name: Name suppressed

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Partially
Confidential

In 2016 I had my first emergency c-section for the birth of my daughter. I believe I experienced medical negligence and trauma during pre, birth and postpartum care.

At 37 weeks I was full of fluid and no nurse or doctor seems to be concerned or worried- even when I was over 25kg heavier than normal. I later found out I had a condition Polyhydramnios and I only found this out years later when pregnant with my 3rd child. During my 39week check up at [REDACTED] public hospital, the Male Dr had a student Dr in the appointment with me. The Dr did not speak to me directly and even examined me internally which was very uncomfortable and I asked for a female nurse to be present and he seemed annoyed I asked for that. He then wrote on my yellow card an induction date (even though my birth plan was to have a natural labour birth) and said the baby's head was engaged- he was wrong. The baby was nowhere near engaged. I rang the hospital later to cancel my induction.

When my waters finally broke I laboured for 26hrs. During that time I was at [REDACTED] public hospital and my cervix was not dialating. I only managed to get 4cm. During that time, SEVERAL staff members (drs and nurses) examined me and tried to stretch my cervix. This lead to lots of pain and blood. I asked for an epidural and staff continued to examine me internally. It felt like I had about 10 examinations and they only stopped when a midwife exclaimed I was bleeding too much. We decided to go ahead with an emergency c-section and my daughter was born- she was very big (4.45kg) I am only 5 foot 1 and petite. As soon as she was born, she was whisked away with my husband and I was sent to recovery. We were unable to have any skin to skin contact, my husband didn't cut the ambilical chord and I was apart from my newborn baby for 2-3hours. I cried and cried and not one staff member came to help.

When I finally saw my child she was screaming soooo much and I was crying so much. I remember 2 nurses were stripping us both down and they were grabbing my

Daughters head trying to Force her onto my breast for a feed. It was utterly traumatic as I imagined our first time having skin on skin to be more peaceful.

At this stage no one had mentioned the effect of a c-section or what recovery would look like after such major surgery.

That evening, I looked over to find my baby blue- coughing up blood and mucus. I sat up to try and help her and hurt my scar. I buzzed for help and no one came I crept buzzing and then when a nurse came I was told they were on handover and couldn't come when I first buzzed. I found out later that children born c-section have not had mucus squeezed out of them like they would via a vaginal birth.

The next morning after my catheter was removed, I needed to go to the toilet. I'm buzzed for assistance as I was absolutely shocked by the pain from the c-section- I could barely sit up in bed. Again no one came and I almost wet the bed. When 2 nurses did arrive, one held her hand out so I grabbed it and tried to get up. The nurse let go of me

And I fell back onto the bed. I cried out in pain. She then proceeded to raise her voice at me and told me that I should not be lifting or pulling myself up. I was completely shocked, shaking and crying from the pain. I had no information on post natal/surgical care, no-one came and

told me what I needed to do. I felt so helpless and disappointed in the lack of care and compassion from

The nurses.

In addition, I went for 8 hours without pain relief, I rang/buzzed and called but no one would come. My husband came in the afternoon and found me

Beside myself crying and clenching my fists in agony. He went to

The front desk to ask about my pain relief and the nurse seemed surprised that my buzzer/light indicator had not been attended to. I also had a swollen, bruised and sore vagina from all the examinations I received during my labour on top of my caesarean recovery. I never had support underwear recommended for post natal care, No physio. No discussion at all about how to managed my recovery at home.

I have suffered with post natal

Depression and trauma from this experience. When I had my second child- a son I was lucky to have successfully made it into the Midwife Group Program. When I explained my experience with my first birth the midwife was in tears.... That really showed me how my experience with my first birth was not ok and validated my feelings about it. My second experience was much better and my midwife

Validated and advocated for me. I was more informed and felt like I had a voice. Still,

I have not recommended [REDACTED] public hospital to any pregnant woman and I have since moved to the private system.