

Submission  
No 370

## INQUIRY INTO BIRTH TRAUMA

**Name:** Name suppressed

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Partially  
Confidential

Hi, my name is [REDACTED], I'm 32 years old and live in [REDACTED]. In June 2021, just as the covid lockdowns begun I was 39 weeks pregnant and had a spontaneous labour. My whole pregnancy was low risk and i studied up as much as I could of, in order to be informed and be able to make the best birthing decision for myself and my baby. I was on the GP/ midwife share program, which I was abit disappointed about, as I applied for a continued midwife when I was 5 weeks pregnant and was declined "due to high demand" for my due date. Fortunately my best friend is a midwife, so I could always count on her if I had any after hours concerns, or random questions.

My contractions started on the 28th of June around midnight, a whole 24 hours later I went into to [REDACTED] Hospital to see how I was progressing, since I had 4 minute apart contractions for over 24 hours. It was now the 29th around 1am and I was in the assessment room, strapped to an awkward cold chair for monitoring, and super discouraged when i found out that I was only 1cm dilated. After getting cleared, we decided to go home and continue to labour in order to be more comfortable, we left around 3am. The next 5 hours at home I had progressed quite alot and the pain was nearly unbearable, paralytic, my water broke around 7:30 and it was time to go back to the hospital. I couldnt walk at this point so I was wheeled into the birthing unit around 8am. I explained my situation and was once again put in the assessment room. It felt like there was a shift change at the time and I was once again strapped to that awkward chair for baby monitoring and told they had to confirm my waters broke, I begged for some water as I was overheating and 2 staff including my midwife went away for 10minutes at a time without hearing anything I was asking for.

These minutes were crucial and no one was listening, upon coming back she advised that yes infact my waters had broken and she'd finally checked how dialated I was. My body was already pushing the baby out, naturally, 60 seconds on, 60 seconds break and even then the midwife was carefree, until she realised I was 10cms. To my frustration, I quickly requested a water birth and was declined because I didn't have enough time to a. Get a room with a bath and b. It was too late. I was so angry, we had just spent a crucial 1hour "assessing" my active labour instead of listening and assisting me to do what needed to be done. I was given 3 contractions to push before the midwife pressed the panic button in the birthing room, and my room filled up with people, aprox 5, including a doctor.

I was told that my heart rate and babies was under huge stress and dropping, I'd need an episiodomy and vaccume. I felt deflated. Thankfully I had a safe delivery within a few minutes after that, but had always hoped for no intervention. On the maternity ward there were no actual experienced midwife's only young nurses who couldn't help with nearly anything I needed or questioned, I understand it was covid but I stopped ringing the buzzer because it would take hours at a time for someone to come and better yet, they couldn't help. I decided to stay 2 nights because I really wanted to get my baby to latch and breastfeed, however even the lactation consultat confirmed the baby wouldn't latch and suck, so she left it at that. I'm grateful that I was persistent and after 6 weeks we were fully breastfeeding unassisted, I'm also grateful for this one experienced woman who came in really early one morning and explained how being vaccume delivered would impact my babies ability to suck, she made me feel like I wasn't hopeless. I now have a super healthy 2 year old boy and I am currently 38weeks pregnant with my second.

I was more fortunate this time to at least see the same midwife for all my antenatal appointments Thursday nights. I think my whole experience would have been less traumatic if I was taken seriously as a first time mum birthing, I feel like the staffing numbers are no

where near where they need to be and so much more training and knowledge needs to happen to assist woman to birth feeling safe and heard. I look forward to welcoming another baby into this world any minute/hour/day and I hope to have a more empowering birth this time round.