

Submission
No 374

INQUIRY INTO BIRTH TRAUMA

Name: Name suppressed

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Partially
Confidential

I struggle to adequately articulate the treatment I received during the pregnancy and births of my 2 children at [REDACTED] hospital. I do not believe I have emotionally recovered from the births as speaking about them makes me upset.

1st pregnancy: I was monitored for gestational diabetes as I returned a reading of something like 6.2 when the healthy level was 6; my antenatal visits and the birth of my son took place at [REDACTED] hospital. I had to record my blood sugar level for a period of time until the Drs were satisfied that the readings were normal (and they were). During the Antenatal visits I was told repeatedly by the Obstetricians that I was at risk of having a big baby. Low and behold my baby was born and 1 of the Obstetricians said to me that she was surprised as my 'baby was small for an Islander baby'. The overall experience attending the diabetes clinic was not positive for me. I became uneasy about attending the antenatal clinics alone, as I often left feeling like I had been spoken too disrespectfully and shamed for my condition. I ended up organising to take my friend with me as a support person.

16th Jan 2020 Birth: My waters had broken; I was already at the hospital for a 9am antenatal appointment. The antenatal clinic sent me to the birthing ward. As my contractions had not started it was decided labor would be induced with Syntocin. The obstetrician told me I failed to progress, and my baby was becoming distressed. I was sent for a c section, by 5pm the same day my baby boy was born.

I was not told that Syntocin may make my baby distressed, I was not told that I didn't need to have an induction and I could wait for the contractions to commence naturally. I was not given the option to go home and wait. I felt the obstetrician created a sense of urgency so that I would be scared into having a c section. When I look back, I was so uncomfortable at the hospital. I had a cannula in my arm, a CTG monitor around my belly and then some wires (which were connected to the baby's head) hanging out of my vagina. I've come to the conclusion the obstetrician and hospital created an environment which supported a c-section delivery because it was better for time management. My friend was with me and witnessed my treatment.

2nd pregnancy: VBAC clinic. A vast improvement on the previous antenatal experience. The midwives and Obstetricians were great and appeared supportive for me to have a VBAC.

16 December 2021: I think I was 41+2, baby was in a good position. Prior to the 16th I was asked a couple of times if I would like to be induced and I declined. I felt I had made my decision regarding any type of unnecessary intervention clear to the midwife. However, one visit to the hospital the midwife did a physical examination to check if I was dilated. While her finger was in my vagina, she said, 'While im up here, would you like me to do a sweep and stretch?' I told her again that I didn't want an induction.

Then my waters broke in the morning, no contractions, I called to let the hospital know my waters had broken and they said to come in for a checkup. While I was there, I started getting a brownish discharge. it was confirmed to be meconium and I was told I needed to have a c section as I had not started contractions and I was only 1cm dilated. I told the midwife and obstetrician that I did not want a c section at that time. My baby was not showing any signs of distress. I was given 45 minutes to make a decision as there was a space available for the operation. I told my midwife I did not want a c-section and she told me, if I didn't have a c section that I would need to sign an indemnity agreement incase anything happened to the baby. There was no offer to monitor me and the baby for a period of time, just a grumpy midwife trying to fit me into to the next available slot for a c section. At that stage I felt really

unsupported, and my partner was getting worried, I agreed to the c section and my baby was born shortly after.

On both occasions I feel like I was robbed of being able to birth naturally because the hospital was trying to fit me into their schedule. I'm afraid to have a 3rd child because the hospital system doesn't appear supportive unless I'm having another c section. If I were to have another baby, I have no choice but to deal with these uncaring assholes in the maternity ward again.