

Submission
No 379

INQUIRY INTO BIRTH TRAUMA

Name: Name suppressed

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Partially
Confidential

Inconsistency in care from the start.

Couldn't afford a homebirth and didn't get into MGP.

During Covid and not being vaccinated - was treated really differently and created disconnect between me and my GP. I tried to find different care.

Confused between public and private system - ended up with private midwife doing prenatal & post-natal care but had already been in public system.

Spent a night in hospital for no real reason and got forgotten about. Felt physically ill from the experience when got home.

Birth Trauma relating to treatment and lack of care from doula at home.

Actual Birth had a doctor who wanted to escalate things for no real reason. Me and bay were fine but it had been 24 hours. Contractions were quite close together. I asked her to leave, to have some time. She came back and said in her experience women in my situation have bad outcomes and could die (long labour, liver and kidney enzymes going up slightly) - baby and I travelling fine and progressing slowly. I denied c-section and reminded her I didn't have HELLP Syndrome or Pre-eclampsia. Other OBGYN apologised on her behalf and said she never should have said that. Change of midwife and due to having epidural I agreed to a student doctor being present. At two stages student doctor took bloods and mucked it up both times. VERY uncomfortable. Eventually talked into an epidural with syntocinon by OBGYN. Long story short - OBGYN did a check and was still 7cm and recommended a c-section. Used the language 'we can get you in now otherwise you might not get in due to other births happening'. Very tired by this point of so many people coming in and out of my room, having no rest, feeling pressured and not feeling safe or being able to relax, I agreed.

Anesthetist did ice test down leg and could feel it - so topped me up again. Hear someone say I was 8cms. Played on my mind for such a long time. I also asked the anesthetist to talk me through what was happening and no-one said anything - and I had already been cut open. Baby was out and I only got to hold her for 5 minutes as I started shaking from all the drugs - didn't hold her for an hour and she was just crying. I was asking and asking and asking for a drink as I felt extremely dehydrated and it was like NO-ONE heard me. Between this I was so worried about my baby screaming and what was happening to me - it was horrible.

After an hour I stopped shaking, got a can of soft drink and some apple juice which I sculled and my daughter was put back on me. Then over the next few days with even more lack of sleep I had some great midwives but also some that were very blunt and one that had a go at me (woke me up in fact' saying 'You can't do that' rushing over - as I had fallen to sleep with my baby on me and didn't even know because I was so tired. We were both ok. I couldn't move at one point and my baby was screaming and had to wait so long for someone to bring her to me.

I denied vitamin K and then had ppl come in to try and convince me otherwise - I did NOT have the energy to do this and DO NOT understand why after declining it - they continued to push.

Ppl CONSTANTLY coming in and out of room. No rest. Lactation consultant suggested we couldn't leave as baby needed to put on weight. She was a very stressy energy and I had to let her know I had a private midwife doing my care and I'd talk to her. Spoke to my private

midwife who said everything was perfectly normal and my milk hadn't come in. Baby was completely fine.

Did a brief debrief with my doula and I asked if 'we' could have done anything differently and she said I shouldn't have gone to hospital.

Long Term - already sleep deprived I would begin to replay and replay everything through my mind and continue to try and figure out 'WTF happened'. Although things seemed to be our decision there was just so much pressure and no reprieve for me. I look back and can't believe that a woman in labour has to deal with all of that shit...it tired me out which is energy I NEEDED to keep.

The doctor wanting to escalate things got me really worried as I felt that it would send me into shock (as things were already feeling physically very intense).

There was not much oxytocin going on as I was just in a flight (more fight) state as I couldn't leave.

Friends having physiological births would extremely upset me and I would relive things that happened in my birth AGAIN.

My relationship with my husband was REALLY hard - and although we are ok - the constant of me asking questions, talking about it, wanting clarification, him experiencing his own birth related trauma - was A LOT. - Along with navigating the physical recovery and becoming a new parent. Then due to covid I didn't get my last appointment with my midwife at 6 weeks and then all care disappeared. On our own... nothing else. At one point I was worried about my milk supply but didn't have money to afford a lactation consultant (and asked my midwife but she said she'd have to charge me).

There were some lovely people during the time - but honestly, the language used, the pressure, the lack of bedside manner in SUCH an important time for me - was just awful.

I really hope writing this submission can make a positive change. As we plan for our second baby, I am worried about my options as I again, can not afford a homebirth with midwives and want a VBAC. I am also worried I may not get into the MGP if I apply - and what that will mean for me. Does worry me quite a bit that I won't get continuity of care or a support team who does not support VBAC. It shows that many women do not actually get to 'choose' where they birth and what support they have as there are many barriers in place and so much different information. I experienced inappropriate treatment in pregnancy, birth and postpartum.

Women need to have access to continuity of care and language needs to change with care providers - women should leave their birth feeling transformed and empowered - not isolated, scared and traumatised. There needs to be a funded homebirth option where midwives are trained and happy to support the birthing mother even if there is a variation in babies position. No time pressures on how 'long' labour should be. More women being able to go into spontaneous labour with out pressure to be induced. Women to stop being told their baby is too big and their pelvis is too small.

SO MUCH MORE funding and support towards postpartum care for families - including accessible perinatal psychological help, physio, lactation support etc

I have got a Mental Health Care Plan to speak to a perinatal psychologist but I will still be quite out of pocket which makes it all much harder to access, especially with everything costing so much at the moment.

Things NEED to change.