

Submission  
No 310

## INQUIRY INTO BIRTH TRAUMA

**Name:** Name suppressed

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Partially  
Confidential

I suffered birth trauma with my first baby at the hands of \_\_\_\_\_ Hospital in 2017. After a very easy, low risk pregnancy I was induced at 41 weeks purely for post dates. It was not medically indicated and I only agreed to it as the ob at my 40 week appointment pulled out her diary and started scheduling me in and I wasn't informed that I could say no.

I arrived at the hospital at 41 weeks to be induced and the plan was to have Cervidil tape inserted that afternoon, spend the night in hospital and be put on the drip the next day.

The Cervidil ended up hyperstimulating my uterus and sending me straight into labour. I was moved to the birthing suite and once there I asked to labour in the shower. The midwife arranged the mobile ctg monitors for me and helped me into the shower.

It was within minutes that the Obstetrician came in, asked myself and the midwife what I was doing in the shower and demanded that I get onto the bed. Obediently I did and it was here that I then laboured on my back for the next 6 hours.

As soon as I was on the bed, the ob broke my waters which immediately made my contractions so much stronger and painful. Then followed the cascade of intervention of me needing pain relief to cope.

After a few hours of labouring on my back (it's worth noting that my baby was posterior so all the pain of the contractions were in my back) I was begging for an epidural. It took hours for the anaesthetist to arrive and by the time they did, they checked me and said I was fully dilated and able to start pushing. I had been feeling like I needed to push already for what felt like hours and had been told to "fight that feeling"

I then pushed for 2 hours on my back. My baby kept coming down the birth canal with each push and then going back up. He mustn't have been coping well as they then screwed one of the monitors into the top of his head. I was not fully informed as to how that monitor worked and had they explained how they actually screw it into the skin I would not have agreed to that.

At no point in the 2 hours of pushing did anyone suggest I change positions to try and help get the baby out despite me not having an epidural so I would have been capable to changing positions.

I was quite high by this stage on Morphine, Panadeine and Gas that I didn't even think to ask to change positions.

After 2 hours of pushing the Ob started talking of a c-section and I pleaded not to have one. She performed an episiotomy (again without my true informed consent) and started waving the forcep tongs between my legs demanding that I have 10 minutes to get this baby out.

I managed to do it despite my sheer exhaustion and fear.

Once the baby was born he was placed on my chest for only seconds as understandably he too was exhausted so the cord was cut and he was whisked away to the table to be checked over by the Paediatrician.

The baby was OK and placed back on my chest.

Not long after the Ob started getting impatient that my placenta hadn't been birthed yet and started roughly massaging my abdomen. It's then that a random health professional (I don't know if she was a Dr, a midwife or what) popped into the room with her backpack on, on her way home from her shift and then

takes over with the abdomen massage while the Ob applies cord traction to the umbilical cord to try and release the placenta. I felt very exposed and vulnerable to have this random health worker pop in, clearly who had finished their shift and was just 'helping' out. She was even rougher with the abdomen massage than the ob was.

I ended up birthing the placenta and having a PPH in the process which was managed with a myriad of drugs.

We spent 1 night in hospital before I asked to go home. I was tired, weak from the PPH and physically felt like I had been hit by a bus. My tail bone was so sore from labouring on my back and my episiotomy site stung and ached. It affected how I could sit and for months and months later my tail bone still ached if I sat too long. I also had nightmares following the birth and would wake in an absolute panic.

I went into my first birth so excited to experience the miracle of bringing a life into this world to then having the most traumatic experience of my life.

The Ob high jacked my labour and made it all about convenience for her. The loss of autonomy I felt during it, I somewhat liken it to being sexually assaulted. I wasn't given true informed consent on any of the procedures they performed during labour, I wasn't listened to, I wasn't treated with respect and I wasn't able to make any decisions for myself.

With the birth of my next child 2 years later, I was so scared to have that birthing experience again that I declined all mention of induction and planned to labour at home as long as possible. I ended up having such a peaceful, easy labour at home that I didn't actually make it to the hospital as I had no idea I was so close to giving birth as the contractions were so manageable. The baby decided they were coming before the ambulance could even arrive.

We're currently trying for a third child and this time I plan on having a planned homebirth. Home is where I feel safe and supported.

In making changes to policies, I believe all women who have low risk pregnancies should have access to publicly funded homebirths and all women have access to continuity of care with midwives.

I went into my first birth not knowing any of the midwives or the Obstetrician on duty that day and I think that definitely contributed to my birth trauma. There was no rapport with any of them, none of them knew me personally, I felt like just another cow in the cattle line.

I really hope this inquiry can make some real changes within our birthing system to ensure women are not walking out of their births battered, bruised and traumatised and instead walking out feeling empowered and overjoyed in knowing that they just experienced the absolute miracle of bringing new life to this earth.