

Submission
No 337

INQUIRY INTO BIRTH TRAUMA

Name: Name suppressed

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Partially
Confidential

My name is _____, I live in _____, I'm 25 years old and I have a 7 month old.

I gave birth to my daughter at home with my private midwife on Dec 21st 2022. I decided to have a home birth for many reasons but the key reasons were the numerous studies that highlight the importance of a known midwife and the respectful relationship with decisions on what tests, how and when being given back to the mother (me). Which is what I experienced and loved. A very happy and calm pregnancy I had.

My difficulties begin with getting a referral to access the Medicare rebates provided for the care received by my private midwife when I was around 8wks. The Doctor, whom I had seen for awhile and was previously aware of my intention to have a private midwife, told me that having a homebirth could mean that I'd bleed out and die, have a hysterectomy and a few other unsupported and unwelcome comments. As well as how the doctors insurance will not cover them for referring for the homebirth, despite the referral bring for the care provided not the birth (I did report to the HCCC).

Fast forward to the day I gave birth. I was part of the small percentage of women to have a retained placenta leading to a significant post partum haemorrhage. I needed a transfer to _____ Hospital. Around 1hr - 1.5 after my midwife had called the Ambulance we finally arrived. Whilst I understand the emergency we were in, the OBGYN proceeded to say that he needs to examine me and then proceeded to put his hands up all the way inside my vagina to feel the placenta. As a person who experienced childhood sexual abuse this was a very shocking and freezing moment. I knew he was going to examine me but I wish he had said what he was going to do. Then we went into theatre for manual removal. As I was still under and recovering the OBGYN then 'debriefed' my husband by telling him that I nearly died, that I'd lost 4ltrs of blood at home (it was closer to 1ltr) and "he should have had a sterner talk with me" to stop me having a homebirth. This is all while he's watching me still incubated and with our baby not with us in the NICU ward (baby was well). The hospital social worker had to step in as soon as the OBGYN had left, telling him that he should not have been talked to like that and clearly the OBGYN felt the need to share his opinion but should not have been so brash. As one can imagine my husband was left in tears, feeling like he'd failed, scared of what he'd just witnessed and no ability to connect with our baby.

In the end we've all recovered well, my private midwife's care over six weeks was amazing and the midwives at the hospital were lovely (although I will note one night there was something like 18 patients, with babies, to one midwife). All the midwives we talked to told us how it really would not have been much different, whether I gave birth in hospital or at home but I know now for my next pregnancy and birth we are scared of similar fear based and harsh comments been given. I fear having to give birth in a hospital where my personal care choices can be so brazenly criticised and disrespected. Whilst an emergency happened and I do greatly appreciate the care. The emergency also showed me some of the reasons why I had wanted to have a private midwife to begin with.