

INQUIRY INTO BIRTH TRAUMA

Name: Name suppressed

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Partially
Confidential

Please find my story below.

At 40 weeks I was told I was extremely healthy, baby was happy and healthy and there was no reason that the baby should be induced or encouraged to come out sooner.

41+ 3 weeks I arrived at the Hospital where my induction began with a failed stretch and sweep. The stretch and sweep cause nothing more than multiple cramps and discomfort that resulted in poor sleep for the following nights. I was told to go home and keep coming back in for the regular daily check ups.

On the 9th of June 2021 I arrived at the hospital to begin my formal induction. I started with the tape, which resulted in zero dilation and a horrible overnight solo stay at the hospital, followed closely by the balloon on the 10th of June.

I had extreme discomfort the whole time the balloon was in (which was an over night stay). And after complaining multiple times about pain in my back and bottom, I was finally given a panadine forte to manage the pain, which did absolutely nothing. I was experiencing contractions in my back all night, therefore unable to sleep a wink. (sharing a room with 3 other snoring women definitely did not help calm the situation)

Finally on the morning of the 11th of June, to my horror, the balloon fell out. In shock to find out what horrific object had been placed inside of me this whole time. The nurse on shift then commented that it had never been entered properly in the first place...

So by the morning of the 11th of June, I was currently 48 hours deep of no sleep and prepping to begin the next stage of induction. The drip... And then finally the hook to break my waters.

After a few hours, approx. 6-7 hours, I decided to opt for the epidural, which was entered incorrectly and only worked on half of my body. I was told to lie on the opposite side, where it wasn't working and hope it 'drained' over to that side. After hours of lying on my side with a the dead weight of the rest of my body on it in excruciating pain in my lower back while experiencing the drip and the contractions, they decided to take it out and try again.

Thankfully, the next time worked. The nurse decided to leave the room and give me a moment to rest as it was approaching 56 hours of no sleep. Although, within 30 mins I had fully dilated and had the urge to push. After an hour of pushing they realised he was stuck and decided to make the call and get my into the operating theatre for an emergency. It was at this point, I strongly believe that the professionals could have changed the outcome of my future. This is the moment where a c-section should have been a non negotiable.

My epidural was topped up again, causing me to shake uncontrollably and unfortunately, I was given an episiotomy and forceps were used to get my 4.1kg baby out. All I remember from this time is the doctor yelling at my to stop shaking while she was stitching me up.

Once out, his eye was black and bruised after what I genuinely think, was months of being squished in the same place in my pelvis.

The first comment made to me was 'he is huge and your torso is tiny, no wonder he was stuck, he was never going to have enough room to make it out'.

Surprisingly, no one in the 10 months I had been attending the hospital had made this assumption.

So after 3.5 days of no sleep, I made my way down to my private room, which I am now aware is given to 'difficult births' and thankfully my partner was able to stay with me to give me some rest. Almost every doctor came to visit me over the period of time I was in there, which made me feel 'sus' on the whole experience. Although as a new mother, I didn't know what else to expect and thought my experience was 'normal'.

After 4 nights, I was finally sent home, ill equipped for what was about to follow. The hospital called me and I requested a debrief to understand what happened and what went wrong with my experience. No one was able to answer.

I was unable to sit down at all for the following few weeks, unsure of what pain was 'normal', I pushed through a terrible discomfort in my bottom/ perineum area.

Thankfully on the 29th of June a nurse came to my house to check in. She noticed I was unable to sit, could hardly stand and had bad fevers. By this time, I had started to develop a large lump in my perineum. She encouraged me to go to the doctor, I had a doctors appointment booked for the next day and decided to wait until then to get it checked out.

When I arrived at my doctors surgery, she immediately called [redacted] at the [redacted] and requested I was transferred there for immediate surgery as I had septicaemia.

Within 4 hours I was under general anaesthetic and my 6cm abscess (only mm's away from my episiotomy scar) was operated on and drained. I was hospitalised for another 5 days with my brand new baby along side me. Still managing to breastfeed while hooked up to every antibiotic imaginable.

The general consensus was 'random abscess, no fistula'. I had never heard the word fistula before and it stuck in my head.

Once I was discharge I was to come back to the hospital every 2 days for a local anaesthetic where they would continue to drain the abscess. I was then told I was 'healed with no sign of a fistula'..

Wrong.

Months and months went on of boarder line abscessing, multiple courses of antibiotics, multiple doctors visits, MRI's, trips back to the Maternity ward to get a second opinion and finally one of the doctors suggested I speak to a colorectal surgeon. (I'd love to write a story about my experience with them as well!)

After 4 opinions I finally found a wonderful colorectal surgeon in Sydney who confirmed I have a fistula in my sphincter and since they operated on the abscess, and the hole never closed up, I now have. 4.5cm tract allowing fecal matter to transfer from my bowel straight outside next to my bottom. I have had attempted surgeries to fix this and I now have a seton in place with a LONG journey of recovery ahead, which hopefully will not end up with a stoma bag in place. (Not to mention the mental recovery !)

I will never know what happened during the birth. Was it the pressure from the balloon pressing on my sphincter for too long which resulted in a tear internally? Did they actually nick me internally when were doing the episiotomy? Was it a random freak incident that has almost cost me the opportunity to have more children.

And just to note, I have no pre existing conditions, have not been diagnosed with Crohns or similar which would typically cause such things.

In my instance, I strongly believe that the professionals in the situation should have made an executive decision to perform a c-section. Unfortunately, I feel the hospital was understaffed and over worked and I was just 'overlooked' and things were missed.

I personally think women should be given a pregnancy and birth prep kit provided by the government which includes 1 x pre & 1 x post birth pelvic floor physio appointment, 1 x debrief with your delivery doctor and 2 mental health appointments, 1 x pre and 1 x post.

I look forward to seeing changes in the system. Unfortunately I am now completely scared by the public system, especially the _____ and hope to never set foot in there again.

Thank you.