

Submission
No 453

INQUIRY INTO BIRTH TRAUMA

Name: Name suppressed

Date Received: 11 August 2023

Partially
Confidential

The birth of my 3rd child at [REDACTED] Hospital.

I was under the Midwife Group Practice Program which I jumped onto quite late in the pregnancy. I was induced at 40 weeks due to the size of the baby being larger, even though I had previously delivered 2 other large babies vaginally with no major issues.

Whilst I was overall happy with the midwifery care I did have to advocate to have my platelets checked as I had low platelets in my previous pregnancy.

I had several ultrasounds throughout the pregnancy with the last being the day before I was induced at the hospital to check babies position. On that day I also had an internal examination which whilst the doctor was checking the cervix said she was going to perform a stretch and sweep which I was unprepared for, I had one the week prior with my midwife and it was horrible.

On the day of induction I presented to the hospital with my one support person due to strict Covid restrictions. Upon the first check it was found that I had dilated overnight naturally. I was still induced and once the medications were administered the labour began hard and fast.

I had planned to have a drug free water birth and had been advised that once the baby was crowning I would have to get out of the water due to the size of the baby. This was fine, I tried the bath, but unfortunately I had an extreme nerve pain in my left thigh which the bath did not help. I didn't proceed with the bath.

As labour proceeded to the final stage it became very difficult, baby would start to lower and head was visible then he would move back up. Eventually baby was born with Doctors assisting by removing the umbilical cord from around his neck. I was immediately given medication due to low platelets to deliver my placenta.

I was able to have skin to skin contact for a short amount of time until my baby needed assistance due to respiratory distress. Whilst this was occurring I was still trying to deliver my placenta.

Doctors were called to assist in delivering my placenta, I was losing a lot of blood at this stage and had had no pain relief. The Doctors continued to push on my stomach and pull on the umbilical cord to pull the placenta out. These attempts were unsuccessful and the doctor advised I would need to go to theatre to have my placenta surgically removed.

Meanwhile my baby and his father had to go to the special care nursery to monitor his ops and have phlegm removed.

I was wheeled into theatre where I was handed over to the anaesthetist team and put under. At this stage I did not know if my baby was ok or that I had lost a large amount of blood.

I woke in recovery and immediately asked about my baby, I was told he was fine and was in special care with his father. Doctors then told me that my placenta had fused to my uterus and I had to have it manually ripped from the wall of my uterus and that I had lost approximately 4L of blood and had had a full blood transfusion. I would be moving to the Intensive Care Unit where I needed to be monitored. I was placed in the ICU ward with Covid patients and was woken every hour for ops, I had not eaten since the night before, been through labour, a birth, nearly died and was refused any food. I eventually demanded that I was brought a sandwich which the nurse has to go retrieve from the emergency department. I was in the ICU until the afternoon of the next day, I was left alone without any support person or my newborn baby the entire time because of the restrictions in place. Once I was moved to the birthing unit, I was reunited with my baby which I immediately began my breastfeeding journey, this however was not easy as my baby had been feed formula and I had no milk as I hadn't been able to express milk in the ICU. I also still had a balloon inside of me to stop bleeding and a catheter which made it extremely hard to move and to look after my baby.

I was eventually sent to the maternity ward and upon being sent home I was visited by the doctors that had removed my placenta. I was advised that I should not have anymore children as I would be a high risk for this happening again. I did ask why this was not picked up in my many ultrasounds but no answers could be given. I was then sent home the next day. The hospital had given me a referral to a women's ultrasound and medication to inject for the next 6 weeks. I had a few midwife visits which I was debriefed of the situation. I had 2 follow up appointments, the first was fine the doctor was aware of the situation, however the second follow up appointment which was after an ultrasound which showed that there was possibly still some placenta, the doctor seemed to have no idea of my situation and I had to have them obtain the ultrasound report, I was sent for a blood test and was given no other follow up appointments or ultrasounds. Whilst I am thankful for the doctors and midwife's as they saved my life it was still very traumatic and with more communication and a review of implications of the Covid restrictions for each unique circumstance would have improved the situation and my mental health afterwards.