

Submission
No 428

INQUIRY INTO BIRTH TRAUMA

Name: Name suppressed

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Partially
Confidential

First Birth Nov 2020 –

Elective C section for breech and oligohydramnios, low foetal movement.

Reg who did Caesar, who had scanned me for weeks and knew I had anterior placenta, sliced open the placenta, leading to immediate clamping therefore baby missing out on delayed cord clamping. I had to give him iron drops for 3 months post birth.

This sliced placenta lead baby to have lungs half full of blood (shown on xray) and CPAP for 4 days, antibiotics for respiratory prophylaxis, ampicillin and gentamicin, with the gent injected fast by the nurse, assumed resulting in my sons diagnosed mild bilateral sensorineural hearing loss. A lifetime of issues and appointments that consumed the first 2 years of his life. Resulting in \$4000 grommet operation due to fluid making him moderate deafness. Losing income due to 2 appointments a week.

My son has had respiratory issues and is thin and weak, we place this due to his birth situation.

I was left with postpartum depression, anxiety and psychosis with a tresillian visit and at least a full year of feeling absolutely shocking. I now have persistent anxiety and fear my baby dying or being hurt badly in situations.

2nd birth Oct 2022-

MGP. Taking aspirin due to estimated PE risk 1:93.

I'm a nurse and my pregnancy and birth was handled by my colleagues.

Pregnancy went well, encouraged to have a 28w scan due to firstborn being SGA, this baby estimated at 55th%. Assigned a new midwife who had a form sitting waiting on the desk for me for a 32 week scan. Clearly she hadn't read the notes re no more scans thanks. She was very quick and blunt about thinks and not open to asking how I was wanting to proceed. Now I'd been given the form I was curious to find out an update on baby anyway. Went to the scan - baby estimated at 97th%. Dopplers played up a bit during scan but only the transient ones. Finally confirmed ok to leave.

Went to next appointment and junior doctor was heartless and emotionless and basically reeled off stats of 1 in 100 risk of death attempting VBAC. "Are you happy to proceed knowing the risk of death is 1 in 100". Lucky she didn't pick up I hadn't done the GD test.

Didn't hear from my new midwife and didn't miss her either. Got to 37 weeks and started to have headaches, all day, all week. I was pretty exhausted and tired. My BP on my own machine was 126/91 most of the time. At times 135/90.

Headaches got so bad I contacted my old midwife on that team and told her what was happening. She offered for me to come in and see her. I had urine come back with trace protein. She took my bloods and said it was usual to stay until bloods came back but it was 6pm or so on a Friday and I lived close by. She said she would have the doctors ring me. They rang and said I was negative for PE at that time. Come back next week. I had a call on the Sunday "where are you". Apparently I was to come back in 2 days.

They promised a quick CTG and bloods and I was there for about 3 hours. I said I need to go I'm not waiting around for this. Again I was made to feel like a prisoner like every other appointment.

They said I had to attend the doctor specialist clinic the next day (Monday). So I had hubby take day off work to mind toddler and spent almost all day in that clinic ticking boxes and tests. They said I should induce as I was 39weeks and told me induction had a better chance at 39weeks. I was told if I refused induction I had to attend clinic Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays. This took up most of my maternity leave while I was trying to nest and prepare for baby as I was stuck all day doing tests, waiting for results and doctor consults. I had to sign refusing induction and read the risks of death and such again.

I had to sign "against medical advice" refusal of induction a total of 3 times.

I was scared if I went into labour or had induction I'd be placed with the new midwife I didn't know. I was mourning the loss of my known midwife and how would I labour VBAC with a stranger who didn't support my birth preferences.

I organised induction finally for 40+5 with my previous midwife from my firstborn (planned breech c section). This also allowed us to get grandparents from interstate to mind the toddler.

Induction Balloon Catheter went in 545pm Thursday evening. No gas or pain relief offered and I didn't think about it- the pain during balloon catheter insertion was intense! Two attempts. Cervix high, posterior, closed.

Cheese sandwiches for dinner and juice as it was 7pm and birth suite doesn't get meals.

Ordered maccas at 8pm which took 1.5 hours to arrive as no Uber drivers were available.

Strong cramps for 1min every 8-10mins until 1am odd.

Tossing and turning hard to sleep on hard bed. Moved to guest bed (chaise longue) and took panadol and came back again to harder bed.

Woken by midwife 529 for shower. Bp 140/90

Balloon out 0600.

Canula ivc went into left forearm 0625. I told her it wasn't in as it wasn't flushing. She didn't believe me.

VE for cervix - posterior, night midwife could not reach. Reg came in and did it and said she broke waters. Light meconium apparently, but was more only a mucous plug. I sobbed a lot (coz of mec risks). I envisioned my baby being put on CPAP and being given the toxic gentamicin that my firstborn was given that made him deaf. I wept and wept until I could gather myself and explain why I was so upset. My husband was so confused why I was so upset as he's not in the field.

After all my plans of a freedom birth and walking around, the meconium meant I had to spend the first part of the morning on CTG on the bed.

Walking around and steps for a while after once my MGP midwife arrived.

1040am drip commenced after green left forearm IVC had tissue (of which I told doc it wasn't in but she didn't believe me) and left a fat arm. IVC moved to right hand, grey big bore (16G).

3cm at 1100, waters rebroken as convinced not broken originally. Still nothing came out but the doctor said they could feel hair so they were convinced the water was broken. I didn't feel baby come down any more so.

Epidural recommended when BP 150/100 vs giving hydralazine.

epidural 1400~ 2 attempts, 1 puncture and leak (discovered later, not told at time)

25mins to work

Epidural peaceful, peanut ball, could feel baby's head pressure in bum. Things looking positive. Lying on left side.

For some reason baby's heart rate decided to decelerate post contractions (160 to 130s?) Position changed to right side. Then to my back. Drip turned off to attempt to settle baby, and which it did, however contractions died off. We sat and waited about 2 hours for c section with 2 going in prior to me.

Nice team for c section, they even recognised when I mentioned the bear I had given them for my firstborn's birth present and went and got the bear to show me.

We joked about guessing baby's weight. I guessed 3.6kg, but as soon as he was pulled out I changed my guess to 4.21. My hubby guessed 4.12. I was the closest guess- 4.26!

Born 1953hrs. Taken away and wiped over due to meconium on him. Wrapped up in a blanket and somewhat passed to me. The midwife was happy to give me my baby this time. As he was passed to me I saw his nasal flare and some slight grunting. Here we go again. I looked at him and wanted to try and take him in, look at him as much as I could before he got taken away. I told the midwife he has nasal flare and she took him over to the table to assess him.

He was taken to SCN for breathing - grunting and nasal flare. I went to recovery after theatres and shook like a leaf for about an hour. I then got pushed on bed to the nursery. Baby active on CPAP 5cm. I hand expressed 8ml, 8ml given FF. [REDACTED] looked after you in the nursery and then [REDACTED] had you back to me and sorted quite fast - on CPAP 5 for 2 hours and removed off, 2 hours of observation and [REDACTED] returned you to me.

Daddy had forgotten to take your placenta home so he was on the way back. I was on video call to mum and our midwife walked back into the hospital room, you were back to me at 1235am. Latched immediately and breastfed fantastically for 5mins each side.

Daddy was thrilled to get to see you well and back with mummy. Daddy gave you cuddles.

You slept until 5am and fed again.

8/10/22 713am shoulder tip wind pain ! Lasted hours/all day even when [REDACTED] visited.
8am feed whilst eating Brekky.

We went out to meet your grandparents at 11 in the visitors room "fish bowl". [REDACTED] walked in within his fireman hat on and was so surprised to see us all. We showed him you in the cot and he kept saying "baby". This was all about [REDACTED] meeting you, for us.

We then told the grandparents your name. I accentuated the fact of your middle name, [REDACTED] to Granny [REDACTED] and had a quick sob in her arms. No word from granddad [REDACTED] if he liked your name - no opinion was given.

I think everyone was overwhelmed. My dad [REDACTED] had tears in his eyes.

Midday I felt a bit odd like it was more than the normal headache. It seemed to disappear a bit and came back at 3pm and got worse and worse from thereon.

At 740pm I told my midwife I needed to go to sleep to function. She fussed she would need to do my BP in 20 mins and she looked at the clock as if she really wanted me to wait and stay awake for her to do it at 8pm. I was on 3hrly blood pressures. She settled and did the BP early. Then she woke me up half hour later with OxyContin tablet and I heard a midwife reassure her behind her "tell her it will help with her headache".

As I was lying flat at this point, I looked up at the midwife and happily said I felt much better, I must have just needed the rest. Then I stood up to go to the toilet and felt violent pulsating in my head. It was bulging out of my ears.

A friend midwife said "it's probably the dural headache" and no one acknowledged her. She asked me if I had caffeine and I replied, only from the morning 9am.

None of the pain medications worked. I was told originally I was to consider a dire headache a huge red flag as I was being monitored for PE (pre eclampsia) yet the midwife I had wasn't concerned. I kept asking if a doctor was coming to see me. A obgyn junior doctor finally came and assessed me with disdain. She said I 'didn't fit the clinical picture' [sic] (for an epidural headache). She had a medical junior doctor also come to see me also and deciding my symptoms required a CT venogram with contrast to check for stroke. He also said the exact same line, that 'I did not fit the clinical picture' [sic] for epidural headache. I was told 'women that have epidural headache cannot function, cannot walk, cannot sit to feed their babies'. I said I would die (per se) before not breastfeeding my newborn. It is my duty.

I didn't want to have the CT Venogram done if not absolutely necessary as I was sure that was not the issue. I was on the phone with my hubby in the middle of the night trying to make a decision. I would have to pump ahead to leave my baby with the midwives.

The doctor made out like I could die if I didn't have this CT venogram so I agreed to do it. The obgyn doctor that did my induction cannula and failed and didn't believe me it wasn't in, came to do my CT cannula. She again didn't believe me when I said it wasn't in. We got down to CT and it didn't flush. I told the radiographer it didn't work upstairs either. The radiographer said

to the doctor “well if it didn’t flush it doesn’t work does it”. she was annoyed she had to insert another.

I waited way into the morning to find out there was nothing bad visible in the scan.

Monday the anaesthetics team came around and saw me and had read the notes – it mentioned during the epidural there was a puncture. If the medical staff and also midwives had read these notes to be familiar with my case they would have seen this and taken note of my symptoms. I was offered blood patch repair, which carries risk of another puncture, along with the other risks associated with epidural. They gave me until midday and they would come back and see what I had decided. I was trying to see if I could cope without it. The pain got worse and I wanted them to come back. They came back and said they could do it around 2-3pm that afternoon. I was prepared for theatres around 5pm as the staff were told they would be ready for me soon. I pumped milk and prepared to leave my baby.

730pm came and they still had not come to get me, with 2 calls to theatres. There was an cardiac arrest emergency that ALL the hospitals anaesthetists were apparently busy at? How can one person take all the anaesthetists from a hospital? There is only 1 anaesthetic machine for the one theatre...

A doctor came around at 820pm and told me they couldn’t help me that day, the consultant would do the blood patch repair himself in the morning. I didn’t know what to say to this man as clearly it wasn’t my choice, he had come to tell me how it was.

I fell into a sobbing feeling of doom and couldn’t imagine how I’d get through another night with this headache, trying to feed and care for my newborn baby. I rang the REACH number in desperation and told them my issue and that I was all alone trying to care for the baby, midwives busy with emergencies, and I had the epidural headache. The ADON came to see me and I spoke to her. Then another doctor I had met along the way came and said they will organise the blood patch asap.

A familiar colleague happened to be the anaesthetic assistant and I was so relieved to see a familiar face. I was fixed and had to lie flat and still for 4+ hours. I lay for 6 hours. I had my baby next to me in the cot and couldn’t reach him, and he seemed to know I was there and wanted to be with me. I rang the midwives and waited and waited. He breastfed on top of my chest, but he was so uncomfortable and falling everywhere he damaged my nipples.

I woke at 5am, feeling better. I walked to get a milk and cookie and a shower and felt so much better. Such a relief.

I submitted a complaint to the MUM of the ward and asked for it to be referred on to the doctor team about firstly the JMO doctor who couldn’t cannulate me and who didn’t trust I had a headache. I had some doctors come to speak to me and they said they would discuss with that JMO doctor.

In summary:

Induction procedures done without pain relief offered (I did not know each procedure would be that bad, and gas was available behind me the whole time).

“Unable” to break my waters, yet syntocinon commenced.

Midwife did not coach me to stand up during labour and I ended up not able to stand due to the syntocinon. 2 weeks postpartum I now have a coccyx injury, with severe pain sitting, and then standing. XRAY AND CT done. Still in severe pain at 10 months postpartum.

JMO did not believe me that the cannula was not correctly in situ. Twice. For induction cannula and CT cannula. She tried to cannulate me 4 times and got it on the 4th or so.

Epidural puncture occurred, and I was not informed of the incident at the time and told to be wary of the possibility of a severe headache due to the puncture.

Midwives didn't believe me I had a dire headache that was not able to be resolved with pain relief. Headache felt ok lying down, terrible standing up.

Doctors not believing me of my symptoms.

Huge delay in having the issue resolved by blood patch repair.