

Submission
No 505

INQUIRY INTO BIRTH TRAUMA

Name: Name suppressed

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Partially
Confidential

I experienced birth trauma as a result of how I was treated in [REDACTED] Hospital for the birth of my first child in March 2021. This has affected me physically, emotionally and psychologically as well as delayed my future family planning. My trauma stems from 3 main issues.

- The lack of Continuity of Care between midwives
- The complete lack of any positive emotional support or guidance during my labour
- Unprofessional comments throughout my entire stay.

Whilst having no prior mental health issues I suffered episodes of postpartum insomnia post birth replaying the trauma of my birth this further resulted in episodes of hallucinations and fainting. My baby was sleeping, I was not. I had a long labour and had 4 midwives rotate shifts in once admitted. The first was very cold and provided no emotional support or guidance to me or my partner and I felt like we were completely alone as first-time parents had no support other than medical when she was on shift. I vividly remember comments from the second midwife second “why did you even come into the hospital “if you think this is painful wait till you’re in real labour”, “I had my baby at 42 weeks without getting induced” “your waters haven’t even broken yet“

I asked for sterile water injections as a form of pain relief twice and twice she refused to do it as she saves it for when people were in “real labour”. Dispute only dialling to 5.5cm and my contractions being irregular in timing they were measuring high for intensity throughout. The third midwife attempted to break my waters however couldn’t. I understand this can happen and have no issue with this however it was later revealed that she had scratched my baby’s head and he was born with a wound. The final midwife was surprised as she wasn’t aware that someone had attempted to break my waters. we were shocked at the lack of communication between the midwives.

After having non stop contractions and no sleep since Sunday evening it was finally decided that I would need an emergency caesarean on Tuesday afternoon. I had contractions for over 52 hours before this was put forward to me. I was very pleased with the doctor who performed my Caesarean. I did however have a postpartum haemorrhage and lost over 1.4 Litres of blood due to Uterine Atony. The surgeon explained that this was due to a prolonged labour and stated that my baby was never going to be delivered naturally adding that they shouldn’t have waited so long to deliver via caesarean. Utterly exhausted and feeling defeated I waited to hear the first cry of my baby and some reassuring words from behind the caesarean sheet. The first words I heard was one of the younger men in the room (maybe a nurse or student doctor) joke that “it looks like Voldemort” while a couple of others laughed and said “you can’t say that”. These were the first words said to our beautiful boy.

My milk was late to come in and my baby had lost too much weight we were devastated that we weren’t going to be discharged from the hospital yet as we had to put our baby on a feeding plan. The ward clerk stuck her head in the room angrily saying “you think you’d want to go home by now“. The unprofessional attitude was systemic and disheartening these comments will be with me forever. Whilst I’m eternally grateful to leave the hospital with my healthy baby boy I’m traumatised by my experience at [REDACTED] hospital and completely taken back from the lack of support and unprofessionalism we experienced. I entered the hospital that day buzzing with excitement and confidence, I left completely shattered.