

Submission
No 460

INQUIRY INTO BIRTH TRAUMA

Name: Name suppressed

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Partially
Confidential

I've had three births. My first, at 17 years old was filled with trauma and treatment I've come to learn to be "the norm" amongst most women's first births and at times subsequent births.

My second and third births were free from trauma, due to my own research, commitment and advocacy and NOT with the guidance and education received from our healthcare system as you would expect.

On the 18th of December 2011, I arrived at [REDACTED] hospital 36 weeks and 5 days pregnant to be reviewed due to waters leaking. After initial triage, it was found my blood pressure was slightly high. It was decided to admit me, when I arrived on the maternity ward, I was advised they were beginning an induction to bring my labour on, no risks or purpose was explained, just the process for induction.

Once labour was established and I had been internally examined several times, I was moved to the birthing unit. I was first offered Ibuprofen, following by gas and air, morphine and an epidural for pain during labour, to which the epidural failed. Around midday on the 20th of December 2011, I began pushing.. throughout the entire labour process I had fetal monitors on, when I began pushing the midwife noticed a decline in my babies heart rate and the room filled with midwives, students, doctors and nurses. The doctor told me a different monitor would be attached to my babies head to check for distress. With each attempt at pushing, my babies heart rate went down, I was told I was getting an episiotomy to make it easier to get baby out, and forceps and the vacuum were prepped. The doctor told me I had one final attempt to get the baby out on the next push or he would get him out with instruments.

I birthed my son at 1:44pm, he was placed onto my chest and after his cord was cut and the chaos seemed to be slowing down, my son went blue whilst still on my chest and the nurse tested his response by holding his arm above him and letting it flop down, unresponsive, she grabbed him off my chest and they began compressions and oxygen. He was whisked out of the room.

As they tried to intubate him, they gave him a dose of morphine. The dose given was 3.5ml instead of 0.5ml. This error sent him into a deep coma like sedation which he could not breath for himself. The hospital did not have the equipment needed to care for my newborn, so he was transferred to [REDACTED]

After I had been stitched up for tears and episiotomy. I was advised I would also be transferred.. but they advised to [REDACTED] only that I picked up on this error again did they rectify and I went to the same hospital as my son.

The story doesn't end there with the treatment, trauma, PTSD and ongoing affects this birth caused me and my son, even my family who witnessed it.

But enough of that story reflects the lack of communication, assistance, support, care and respect our healthcare system has on women birthing babies.

I was 17 years old, and I trusted the medical professionals treating me blindly. I didn't question any decisions that THEY MADE FOR ME.

I was NOT presented with choice and options, I was NOT informed and advised of the risks. I was treated like a number and pushed through a system.

The first line of treatment was intervention...

And it flowed on from there.

I've now watched many women of all ages experience birth trauma due to lack of knowledge taught from our healthcare providers.

This needs to change.