

Submission
No 462

INQUIRY INTO BIRTH TRAUMA

Name: Name suppressed

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Partially
Confidential

I had 2 very complex and trauma experiences relating to the births of my 2 sons. I went in to the hospital to confirm that my water had broke for my first baby, August 5th 2016. I was left sitting uncomfortable for hours, taken to a room spoken to for 5 minutes, strapped to a moitor - again left for an hour as labour progressed etc. The nurse informed me, your baby is sunny side up, google exercises to go do at home, or he might not engage. Sent home. When I got home, labour intensified and I could not find exercises online easily and I started to panic, as well as my contractions were 3 minutes apart when I was sent home to google the exercises. To say the least, this was unsatisfactory care - unsatisfactory advice. My baby was stuck and had to have level c emergency c-sect. I was helpless but accepting. The following day when I was supported to shower and change - the nurses kept the bathroom door open but I pleaded multiple times to have the door shut as I could see people walking the halway and they could see me - blood dripping, vulnerable, exposed, in pain, naked - wondering what the heck had just happened. The nurses were rude and horrific, I was so ashamed of the care (or lack of that I was provided), there was one guardian angel lady who was a true empath, she provided such high level care to me and my baby that I forgave everyone elses terrible care. The procedure resulted in a tear in my uterus resulting ina nonchalant statement - your uterus tore in the process and so future babies will require c-sect birth - no further information or care provided on this.

3 days after release experienced intense pain in my stomach (relating to needing the bathroom), a pain that I had not ever felt before, and it worried me - called midwives the response 'that doesn't sound right if it persists go to ED' - hang up.

Baby number 2 - labour and infection at 33 weeks - the staff conducted a \$4000 test that resulted in their determining 1 in 5000 chance that labour will progress in next week. Released due to labour stopping and increase in ketones. I had gestational diabetes and I had a number of complications arise during the pregnancy. After release, 2 days later I phoned mid-wives and said I do not feel right, I feel as though I still am unwell - antibiotics are not working - she said we didn't even find out what the infection was, so if you come in you would be in the same position, rest and panadaol. I was so fatigued and could not go to work the next day - by that evening my waters had broke I was 34 weeks I was in labour. Due to torn uterus plus early baby there was a juggling act between paed and obstetrics team to determine how long to labour (before uterus rupture) verse attempting keep baby in so he has more time - potential for 2 x steroid injections. Labour was on and off for 3 days and eventually he came by c-sect, he was robust and healthy and beautiful. He required special care nursery support, I am thankful for that resource however, noone oriented me to the system and service and so I learned the hard way that if I did not bring my milk - they fed formula - I tried so hard to adjust, I was tough loved, made carry my own pump (heavy hospital grade device) post c-sect, I was made feel helpless - I cried everyday and was discharged so quickly. I paid for accomodation for close vicinity to my new baby and so I could be available for every feed. I felt unheard and as if I was a bother. My post baby pain, emotions and support was non existent. Thank gosh my guardian angel nurse from first birth came and cared for me for 2 nights and one other beautiful soul looked after me, the rest were atrocious and should be ashamed of themselves. I will never have another baby, and I would not recommend coffs hospital. Post birth, my son arose as a screamy/unsettled and in pain baby, I knew it was pain because for 4 hours while his panadol lasted he was able to be settled, I was humiliated by the health care nurse when she asked to see me feed him 'he doesn't like it there' she said - this to a vulnerable - post natal depression mother experiencing high levels of distress - it took me 4 doctors to find someone to listen to me and help me. The health system disregards new mothers, noone takes ownership of caring for brand new babies and the feeling and instincts of mothers are disregarded as pedantic mothers and that is dangerous. I knew I had post natal depression - I was talking to panda - I was distressed - alone - screaming baby and noone cared. Thank gosh I am a mental health worker and so in the depth of my despair I was able to bring myself to a grounding factor or protective factor but I worry for those who experience the same levle of care without being able to bring themself back enough not to act out on their despair. I am 4 years later and I am strong and healthy, but that is no thanks to nsw health or the atrocious care that I was provided. Thank gosh for my beautiful abbies who have given me purpose and made me a mother, they were my protective factors at a time where I should have received better care and so should have they!! I think some choices were made by health that did not arise for concern of me or my babies, and they are so lucky we 3 survived because they were reckless in their disregard for us. Empathy burnout I understand this - they are stretched to thin - without necessary resources and staffing so while the health staff were horrible, the government underfunding-understaffing-under-resourcing are the ones who should be accountable. Happy to talk this through to anyone who wants to listen.