

Submission
No 506

INQUIRY INTO BIRTH TRAUMA

Name: Name suppressed

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Partially
Confidential

I went into my first 'birth' thinking my local hospital and staff know best how to inform me. Mostly due to me being a nurse and employed under that same public hospital.

My care was directed through their pregnancy clinic and mostly midwife led, I was a low risk, 'normal' pregnancy so only saw the obstetrician a couple of times. I attended the labour/birthing/baby classes that were offered, again through the hospital.

I did not feel the need to do any extra learning on my own.

My due date came and went. I had to be induced. This was my first hiccup that derailed my 'birth'. It was briefly explained to me what induction involved. However I was not told about the risks it presented and the inevitable 'cascade of intervention'.

As I'm sure other submissions have detailed, my induction started with cervidil tape (after multiple stretch and sweeps with the midwife), my waters were broken by the midwife once contractions started, then syntocin drip commenced. I cannot describe the immediate increase in force of contractions and therefore pain the ARM and drip caused. I was no longer in control of my body and in fact began fighting every contraction due to the pain. I was not prepared for this at all.

I opted for an epidural. After 14 hours my son was born via emergency caesarean due to fetal distress.

At the time I was praising the staff because imagine if I didn't have access to this care, my son could have been vulnerable and compromised!

It was not until I was trying for a VBAC and educated myself that I realised how naive I was.

I intended to go through a Private obstetrician for my 2nd child but soon dismissed this when she told me at 8 weeks pregnant that I would be a repeat caesarean.

Instead I went through the pregnancy clinic, again. I had postpartum hypothyroidism and felt like I needed to push for regular tests (it was only discovered once I was very early pregnant). As well as push for them to give me test results and therefore either stay on my current dose of thyroxine or increase/decrease it.

This pregnancy meant that I needed to attend the designated vbac clinic, which in turn meant I had the same midwife my entire way through and she was incredible. I felt supported, heard. She provided me with great resources and education.

I ended up getting my dream labour and birth. I ensured I did everything possible to avoid another induction and luckily went into spontaneous labour. I birthed our girl naturally and with no assistance. I felt incredibly proud and empowered.

I am currently pregnant with my third and final child and aim to push for water immersion during labour for this child. It was always my desire to have a water birth and I feel completely robbed of that because of my vbac status. Their evidence around constant fetal monitoring during labour is incredibly weak and restricts my desires. I hope this is something that will change for women in the future.

I am one of many stories of trauma I hear regularly from friends and family around me. I truly look forward to positive change for future birthing mothers.