

Submission
No 507

INQUIRY INTO BIRTH TRAUMA

Name: Name suppressed

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Partially
Confidential

I have had 2 baby boys since 2019, and both labours were going great until my babies heart rates started dropping when I was pushing. This resulted in both births being a cat 1 emergency c section. Overall these c sections went ok, however after my second birth, the doctor (2nd in charge possible?) decided to tell me I would never have a vaginal birth right as she passed me my son, which really ruined this moment for me and this is what I will always remember as the first time I held my son. It was very sad for me.

The recovery in the hospital was very distressing for me, particularly after the 1st. I felt the midwives and nurses were so understaffed. I could hear them running around the halls, but still I felt I didn't have access to them enough. This is not their fault! This resulted in delayed pain meds, resulting in severe pain. It also resulted in the first night when I was still Catherised, with my legs in the circulation pumps and just after my c section, having to sit up multiple times a night to retrieve my son (awkwardly and dangerously from his cot, sometimes to assist him from choking on his own mucous). This was so distressing for me and I strongly believe I was experiencing trauma in these moments. I sat in my room crying most of the night and felt so alone and in pain.

I don't regret my c sections, but after doing SO much research I started to realise that not c sections are necessarily and many women are subject to them for silly reasons. I started to realise that not everything doctors say can be trusted and this built mistrust in the system

After my second birth, I had access to the midwife group program and this significantly helped me in my recovery in my experience and it was a more positive experience. I had people checking in with me, and visits daily. Someone I could text with questions. I would have strongly benefited from this resource and continuity of care the first time but didn't get into the program.

I now plan to go private for my future births knowing that they will need to be c sections.

I think most midwives love what they do and want to support mums, but I feel like doctors and understaffing issues are strongly impacting births. I also thing that evidence based choices are not being made, and this is resulting in a crazy number of unnecessary interventions that are increasing birth trauma.

I have seen a psychologist after both births to process the trauma. Of nearly losing my babies, of feeling alone and scared and in severe pain, of not feeling like I can trust the medical professions in charge of my care. This helped but it also cost a lot of money, so I am privileged. And I still feel like the trauma greatly impacted my transition to motherhood. I was angry, moody, emotional, and I still get a lot of trauma symptom even now 2 years after my last son was born.