

Submission
No 508

INQUIRY INTO BIRTH TRAUMA

Name: Name suppressed

Date Received: 10 August 2023

Partially
Confidential

In the weeks prior to my baby's birth my family was under a lot of stress, and on the day of my forty week check up my father was in life saving surgery, there were signs the baby was stressed due to decreased movement and it was recommended but my midwife and a doctor that I be induced. I felt I was too vulnerable at the time to make this decision. I told them that I felt my labour was starting naturally and that I'd probably be in natural labour by the end of the week, to be told they couldn't say I would have a happy story if I was not induced.

The day of the birth I quickly realised that induced labour contractions are incredibly hard. I was not told of this prior, and feel this would have impacted my decision. As the "gas" didn't work on the my asthmatic lungs and the pain was too intense I opted for an epidural, crushing my dreams of a water birth.

Then, after hours and hours, the time finally came to start pushing, the OB did an ultrasound to check my babies position, and after being in prime position for the previous ten weeks he had moved, he was now posterior and transverse. The attempt to manually turn him did not work so after an hour of laying on my side and hoping gravity would work and he still hadn't changed positions I was told I can still try to birth vaginally, although it's extremely difficult, it's doable!

I then proceeded to push, on the third round of pushing contractions, my babies heart rate dropped. The consultant recommended we still try to birth assisted vaginally but within the theatre where they can do a c-section straight away if shit it the fan again.

The theatre is a stark sterile difference to the zen birthing suites and when I was introduced to the consultant herself who would be leading the birth, my nerves really kicked in.

I began pushing and was told we needed to use a vacuum cup to try and turn him even more... this cup very forcibly came off my sons head twice, once of which kind of scalped him.

Eventually, he was born using forceps again and was taken straight to special care. My husband went with him leaving me in a sterile white room with my legs spread in the air, strangers stitching me up, my adrenaline causing extreme shakes and no way to know if my child was okay or not.

After hours in recovery and false promises of being able to go to see my son I was taken to straight the ward to sleep for the night. I begged to be able to see him but for reasons unknown I was unable to... it would be over twelve hours since the birth til I was able to see him. This to me was the hardest part of the birth experience.

The birth left me with not only this mental trauma but the physical trauma of a 3B tear. But worse, it left my son with a Subgaleal hemorrhage, which has a mortality rate of almost 25% in babies in the first 24 hours. 12 of those of which I didn't even get to see him. Not once was the seriousness of the situation explained to us and we had to google for answers.

Thankfully my son is okay now, although he had a very sore head for a while and will continue to be monitored

I have since been diagnosed with Post Natal Depression and Anxiety and am currently in treatment for this. My tear has also impacted my return to physical activity, which impacts both my mental and physical health.