

Submission  
No 483

## INQUIRY INTO BIRTH TRAUMA

**Name:** Name suppressed

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Partially  
Confidential

In January 2021 i fell pregnant with my first child. The road to get there was difficult as i struggled to conceive for a long time and my husband and i did many rounds of IVF. We were extremely excited and nervous when i reached the 12 week mark and knew in our heads i was "safe". I got onto the public hospital in my area straight away in hopes to get onto case load where i would be given the one midwife all along. Unfortunately, i missed out on this and was bounced between doctor at the few appointments i did attend due to COVID lockdowns and the fact that apparently the midwife's didn't know if i was allowed to be seeing them because i was an OVF pregnancy or am supposed to be under the doctors care. But given i had no issues the doctors would send me back to the midwives and it was back and forth. I felt very confused and frustrated that i never got to regular care by anyone that felt like they knew what they were doing.

I was a first time mum and had no support by my husband as he was unable to attend any appointments due to the lock downs. This was extremely frustrating given the fact i worked at the same public hospital i attended in the dental clinic and we were doing full areasol procedures and seeing patients. Yet, the father of my child was not given permission to see there child on a screen, or get shown where to take me when i was in labour.

Fast forward to 34 week pregnant, i was finally told after being very relentless of wanting to be on caseload i will get put with a student midwife which meant i would have one student midwife and one midwife overlooking them, which i was fine with.

Unfortunately a few days later i started feeling itchy and was told by some colleagues who were midwife's and nurses (i was working in public health at this point they finally put a stop to dental). I presented to the hospital and did some tests and was told it was most likely i had cholestasis which is an issue with the liver in pregnancy. I started taking medication for this. So now i was told i would no longer be able to be seen by the student midwife and will be under the drs care. What doctor, i had no clue. I had an appointment scheduled for a 3 days later.

3 days later at about 4 am i had my waters break at home. I was 35 weeks, 1 day pregnant. It was totally unexpected and i was in complete denial that there was a possibility i could go into labour. I was not prepared. My house and baby things were prepared but i was not mentally prepared at all. I had been pushed around from person to person and not been to appointments regularly enough i didn't even get a chance to discuss a birth plan. What that could look like. I didn't even know what my pain relief options were or how an epidural is done etc.

After i got to the hospital they confirmed my waters had broken.

They decided since i was so early they would wait and see what would happen if i went into labour they can't stop it, but they also wouldn't induce me because of how early i was.

3 hours later i have a drip placed in my to help stop infection and am told i will probably have to stay a night. I mention i'm getting period like pain, so they check to see if i'm dilated and confirm i'm 3cms. I sat there and cried.

i was completely overwhelmed and felt lost that it was happening so quick. The staff at the time were good and tried to keep me calm, at this point there's no stopping it.

I delivered a healthy baby girl at hours later and throughout my birth there was little issues. I was told due to her being so early there would be a team waiting for her which there was. I also chose to not get an epidural due to wanting to get up as soon as i could and follow my baby to either the special care nursery or NICU wherever she ended up.

Before she was wheeled away from me i had little skin to skin contact with her and had no one help me breast feed her like i wanted.

My husband soon followed her out of the room and went to the special care nursery with her.

I then waited in the room by myself with not anyone there and cried. I had a student midwife walk in and attempt to talk to me. The room felt sterile and lonely. I was planning to go to work today with my baby inside me. Instead, i layed on a bed, empty, alone and exposed with little clothes on. I was not allowed to get up and shower and follow my husband and little girl because i had to wait on a doctor to come and stich up my 3rd degree tears. I understand doctors are busy people, but i was made to wait 2 hours down in the room by myself. Just laying there crying. I facetimed my sister who and sobbed on the phone, i couldn't believe that i was not allowed another support person in this sort of circumstance and that i was made to wait like that.

When the doctor arrived, she hardly spoke any words to me. And clearly didn't look at my paperwork or speak to anyone with knowledge about what happened as she went to stich me up without numbing me at all - because she thought i had an epidural.

I cried the entire time she stitched me up as the process was taking to long, and the numbing didn't work and i could feel what she was doing. I just chose to push a baby out with no pain relief so i could follow her up to her room but instead got hurt more and made to wait over 2 hours.

After i was stitched up, i showered and made my way up to my room. I ate quickly and then made my way to my daughter in special care. Here i saw my husband holding her and a nurse helping him hold her wires. As soon as i walked in they attempted to force my husband out of the room because only one parent was allowed in at a time. I went off at the nurse and said no at least let us name her together.

The nurse was rude, cold and quite frankly did not give a shit about what had happened to us or how i felt. We chose her first name together in a rush and then he left and we texted each other to choose her middle name.

The staff besides this one nurse in the special care nursery were helpful and kind to us throughout our stay. The nursing staff on the maternity ward where i stayed however were not. I was walking every few hours back and forth from my room to attempt to get sleep and back to my daughter to breast feed her every 3 hours like i was told too. After attempting to feed her i would go back to my room and attempt to hand express/ pump what little i could at this stage.

The nursing staff wanted me to go home the next morning after i had given birth at 4pm and my daughter was not going anytime soon. I said i needed to stay longer and the response i got from the nurse was your baby is in special care anyway and going to be here a lot longer than you, you need to be sent home. Little did this nurse know, my child was thriving. Besides the fact she was 5 weeks early, the k my thing wrong with her was that she had low sugars and was being monitored until that was okay. The nurses in special care couldn't say how long but indicated it should only be 2-3 days.

I had a different nurse come in to "check my stitches" the day i had my baby. She was rough and didn't talk through what she was doing.

I had a nursing team do handover outside my door that was shut and talk about how i am depressed but being sent home. That nurse that got the handover later came in, said i was going home and gave me a brochure for depression.

I have previously had mental health issues and disclosed this to the nurses i came across. I was not depressed the 24 hours i was treated like i was, i was in shock and traumatised by what had happened to me as a whole.