

Submission  
No 485

## INQUIRY INTO BIRTH TRAUMA

**Name:** Name suppressed

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Partially  
Confidential

I presented to [REDACTED] emergency hospital with spot bleeding, it was a Friday . I was not registered to the maternity ward as I was just slightly under 16 weeks pregnant. The doctor on duty told me I had a threatening miscarriage. He was sending me home without the offer of a scan or much else. As I am a swimming teacher I explained I was working in the pool for hours that weekend so asked what would happen if I do miss-carry. He asked again how many weeks was ( because he needed reminding) I and I told him 16 weeks. He said 'you will loose something' and left it at that. I then went home and accepted my fate. I did decide to rest and called in sick for work feeling guilty. I still hadn't had my first scan however was due to have it the following week at [REDACTED] hospital approximately an hour away.

I went to my gp to get a referral for a scan (I hoped to have one locally) and a sick note. He told me I should not be there and should be in hospital. I told him I had been turned away the day before and that it's likely no doctors who could assist would be there on a Saturday. That night i started bleeding. The bed pooled with blood. I sat on the toilet and flushed and flushed it kept coming. My husband was outside the door. I wanted to shield him from the sight of what was happening because I was vomiting from my vagina. When I collapsed on the toilet my husband rang an ambulance. It took two ambulances to assist me. I was unable to be lifted from the toilet floor because I would faint again.

Eventually they got me to emergency around midnight. I sent my husband home because he needed to be rested for our son. I collapsed again in hospital I felt I was about to die. I was in shock from blood loss. No one knew quite how much I lost. I felt nauseous so they gave my anti nausea meds against my will and suctioned me down below several times against my will. I repeated 'no no' however being a lifeguard knew that my life was in danger and so consent was overruled.

I remember the emergency room being open with just a curtain around me. I held a nurses hand realising my fate that I was probably on the verge of death. They called a surgeon and I remember one nurse asking if they had called and informed my husband.I knew the situation was grave.

I was wheeled to surgery and when I woke I hid under the blankets crying as the porter wheeled me to maternity. I was given a private room and a nurse came and said 'I'm so sorry you have to be here at maternity'. I told her I finally felt safe because I was familiar with the ward and was feeling thankful for her kindness.

However after a short amount of time there, feeling safe finally, a nurse came to check my blood pressure. There must have been something wrong because they looked concerned and pressed the emergency button. They then stabbed me multiple multiple times and couldn't get a vein. I had no less than 7 picc lines in my arms that repeatedly had to be flushed. I had no blood in my body I'm guessing to keep them open. There was no room in high observation so again I was brought to emergency. Yes that great big room with no privacy unsuited to those in delicate situations. I was given two blood transfusions and was very weak. My blood loss was extensive and no one warned me this could have happened to me. I was angry with the emergency doctor from Friday. Who had said 'mmm u could loose something '. Luckily I didn't traumatise a community in the pool that weekend choosing to stay home and not work.

Unfortunately I had to spend the day in emergency with no privacy. I was so weak my curtains were left wide open so that I could be watched continuously. This meant everyone could peer in. The nurses and doctors continued talking about my case. 'Pregnant 16 weeks presented with....' All the gorier details continued to be spilled out as each nurse or doctors charge over

took place. It was just a terrible place to recover. I was there for a whole day, one long day! My husband and son came to visit me. I must have looked dreadful and we were so solemn when the emergency doctor came in to see me he said 'I believe I met you on Friday. I'm so sorry' we just couldn't look at him devastated not for the loss of our baby but for the trauma we had endured.

We wrote to the hospital explaining all and asking for an explanation and for compensation for our ambulance bill. We were told the doctor had told me to return if bleeding gets worse and that they didn't admit liability. Unfortunately this is not the message I received when I presented on Friday. When I miscarried at 16 weeks it came full flood and this was not foreseen by me or the qualified doctor. I could never have made it to hospital in these circumstances.

A few days later I was seen by the gynaecologist who only works every second Friday. I found out she just happened to be on duty the day I presented to emergency. I honestly believe if she had been called to see me the circumstances would have been different. It made me feel worse knowing this. I think I should have been offered a scan and offered a curette and I think potential risks were overlooked.

We went on to have another beautiful child however I understand these circumstances have effected our family. My little boy has autism and often tells people about the little sister who died. Sometimes it's embarrassing I find myself explaining other times I just wave it on. My husband was left traumatised because he had felt so helpless. He had to explain to his family I was pregnant and had lost the baby all over a phone call while waiting on an ambulance and we needed a sitter. I'm positive the doctor won't make that mistake again after all he apologised however it doesn't rewind time to rewrite the story. People don't often talk about pregnancy loss however I remind people that if there are any concerns or possibly miscarriage get to hospital and don't leave until it's resolved. The hospital never admitted liability or offered counselling services. I was hoping they could educate the staff in regards how to take care of patients in a dignified manner however the closing letter left me with no such assurance. I was recently at emergency with my mum and in the wait room a lady presented with a miscarriage. It all came flooding back as it is now writing this submission. It's been about 6 years since my angel flew away.