

Submission
No 526

INQUIRY INTO BIRTH TRAUMA

Name: Name suppressed

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Partially
Confidential

In June this year I gave birth to a beautiful baby girl at [REDACTED].

My only birth plan was to have access to pain relief when requested and I was assured that this wish would be upheld.

Early on in the labour my requests for pain relief (ie gas) were dismissed as my contractions were not close enough to be considered. I was offered to use a heat pack and given the option to consume an endone (all of which were agreed to however nothing was provided). The midwives on duty made me feel as if my pain was not "enough" and that as this was my first child, the length of labour was expected to drag on.

I persisted through each contraction thinking I need to be stronger if I'm ever going to make it to through to a point where pain relief could be given. Rapidly my contractions began to intensify and I was still unable to proceed to the birthing suite. It wasn't until they attached me to the CGI machine that they could see I was in active labour and deemed "far along enough" to access the gas.

The gas was not working enough and I quickly requested an epidural. This was applied and I was enjoying the relief however an hour into my progressing labour I began to have feeling again in my back. I voiced my concern and was dismissed as the machine that was gradually rolling up the epidural was showing that it was working but my pain was coming on thick and fast and stronger than ever. The midwife/s seemed to be offering an ear to listen but not actively finding out why the epidural was not working. It turned out the cord had snapped somehow. I was told it could've been due to me moving (something I wasn't doing much of while briefly feeling the affects of the epidural. My family and I think it may have occurred when the student nurse was taking my BP and had accidentally clamped the cord. This went on for about 3-4 hours and by now I've used up all my energy I wa shopping to preserve for the pushing stage. The epidural was rectified and redistributed much to my relief but this had now put me in a dangerous position as it's slowed down my contractions and my daughter was now in dangerous distress.

While this is taking place the doctor and senior midwives were attempting for several times to insert my catheter. This was uncomfortable and had me panicking. By now my daughters heart rate was dropping and I was advised that a needle would need to be inserted into her head to draw blood. It was chaotic and terrifying. There was no control in the room, myself, my partner, my mother and my Aunty were flabbergasted and terrified at how my labour was going. It appeared that no one knew what they were doing and there was no chemistry between the doctor and midwives.

By the time I was ready to push there was a change in shift and fresh eyes and a new doctor were introduced and ready to hopefully deliver my baby. I had NOTHING left in the tank. My

daughter was born via vacuum and episiotomy had to be carried out and just the cherrys on top of what was the longest, mentally draining physically demanding day/night of my life.

It took my partner and I 2 weeks to fully comprehend the events that occurred on an event that should've been the happiest day of our lives.

What we took from all the blunders was this:

1) none of us were taken seriously in the early stages of labour. Why was I left to writhe in pain when I asked time and time again for pain relief?

2) why is it assumed that first labours are extremely long therefore I had to wait to fit into a timeline based on an average observation.

3) how is it that an epidural can go so wrong and AGAIN I was dismissed??

4) a catheter should not take so long to apply. This is the equivalent to a chef learning the basics to boiling an egg.

I strongly feel that if I was listened to throughout, we would've have had to experience the chain of unfortunate events that occurred.

We're told as mothers to be that it's so important to advocate for yourself. I've never felt more useless and muted in my life.

I'm done with just 1 baby as I'm not putting myself or my family through such an ordeal again.