

Submission
No 518

INQUIRY INTO BIRTH TRAUMA

Name: Name suppressed

Date Received: 10 August 2023

Partially
Confidential

To the committee,

I felt it was necessary for me to submit my experience with the birth of my son, as I hope that in future, women do not have to suffer the same trauma that I did.

Throughout my pregnancy and labour, I was lucky enough to meet some wonderful midwives who aimed to help me and guide me. Unfortunately, however this was not the case for the majority and I could sense that their time and resources did not afford them the opportunity to care for me as they would have liked.

I entered my 3rd trimester during a covid lock-down and was unable to see any of my family or friends which no doubt added to my subsequent post-natal depression. The most significant distress was during the labour process.

My waters broke on a Monday morning after a night full of contractions. When calling the hospital for advice (which I was told to do) one midwife implied I was calling too much and that my concerns were unwarranted. When I finally convinced her that my waters had indeed broken, she reluctantly advised I should visit the hospital.

During our pregnancy classes, we were told that once waters break, the baby should be delivered as they would not have the nutrients they require for long after that.

The hospital however was "busy" on my arrival and as I had not proceeded to "active labour" to their specifications, it was recommended I go home to monitor the labour. This was my first pregnancy, which they were aware of, and I was very frightened for the baby. I didn't want to seem to be adding to their workload (as I was already feeling like a pest from "calling too much") so I obliged, and my husband and I went home.

The main midwife wanted to book in for me to be induced on the Thursday following my waters breaking. 2 full days after. Luckily another midwife came in and reviewed this request and changed it to Wednesday morning. A move that I have no doubt saved my sons life.

Only in hindsight I can see that my fear was causing my body to pause natural labour. That night I experienced contractions again but on calling the hospital was told to just take panadol and come in the next day for a checkup where again I was sent away as I hadn't progressed to "active labour"

I was induced on Wednesday morning and my son was born naturally (no epidural) at around 3pm. At this stage I was experiencing labour for 3 nights and was exhausted. My son was not well at birth and had trouble breathing. He was taken away for care while I was stitched up by an inexperienced nurse who took close to an hour and was not successful. A doctor was called in and seemed distressed by their actions, he promptly stitched me up and I was able to rest.

My son was in care for a week due to an infection caused by my waters breaking and him not being born until 3 days later.

I have spent countless hours and hundreds of dollars on psychology to resolve my post natal depression. If only the midwives could have been given the time and resource to care for me

as I should have been. To ask the right questions and recognise my fear this all might have been avoided. I have never experienced depression in my life. Now it's something I have to work on continuously.

I hope this commission can find that more money, resource and education is needed in the public sector to avoid possible deaths by women's concerns being dismissed due to hospitals being "too busy" for another birth.

Thank you for reviewing this submission.