

Submission
No 520

INQUIRY INTO BIRTH TRAUMA

Name: Name suppressed

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Partially
Confidential

Birth trauma

My name is _____, I am 38 years old. I have a beautiful almost 3 year old and am currently 9 months pregnant and due to give birth any day now with my second child.

I live in the _____ of NSW and in October 2020 I was the victim of pressure and violent language through my pregnancy which forced me to make decisions that led to the traumatic labour that I experienced with my first baby.

I was in the _____ hospital MGP program which up until full term had been fantastic. I eventually went over the due date and as hospital policy was advised I had to have extra monitoring for the safety and health of me and my unborn baby.

I had no risk factors through pregnancy. Had a planned hospital birth and towards the end of my pregnancy was the fittest and healthiest I had ever been.

My baby was not engaged and I did not feel at all ready.

As we went over the due date my usual midwife was not available as she was on leave and so the continuity of care changed and the midwife assigned had a completely fear driven approach to communication.

I remember talking with a girlfriend, also due and going through the same hospital system at the time and hoping that that particular midwife wasn't on duty in our next appointment as we never felt safe or supported by her but rather scared of her and felt like we were being punished.

I was instructed to have daily check ins. A service 1 hour from my house and with each appointment was peppered by this midwife with the conversation of 'still birth and risking the life of another, and turning down induction was a reckless decision'.

At 42+ 6 I finally caved after the midwife said she didn't want to be responsible for a Still birth and nor should I.'

I had the fear of god driven into me and began the procedure of induction and intervention. These conversations never sat well with me.

As a first time pregnancy I had no idea what felt right or wrong and trusted my care providers to offer me the most qualified information, Given my personal case and experience.

My baby and I were not ready and this followed onto an almost 60 hour labour experience with my daughter finally being delivered under epidural with forceps after a failed attempted vacuum.

I remember in the hospital during labour, continually turning down an obstetrician who was very keen to perform a c section.

I didn't have the experience of labour but I knew that despite the labour being slow x my pain tolerance and stamina diminishing, and the birth not progressing as the ob wanted, I did not need a c section to deliver my baby.

In the final hours my baby was in emergency distress and a private ob who I trusted and was called in to make the decision on delivery options.

My baby was delivered safely.

I feel victim to pressure and violent communication that resulted in induction and intervention which statistically leads to a medicalised labour.

This was not my plan.

And had I not been coerced through fear of being responsible with a still birth, i most likely would have gone into labour naturally when my baby and I were both ready and not have suffered with the experience of the cascade of interventions that led to her delivery.

Since that birth I have had to do a lot of therapy and healing to recover both physically and emotionally from that experience.

I have chosen to homebirth my upcoming baby with a team who I trust to support me to make the best and most informed decisions for ME and MY baby outside of the pressures and policy of a hospital system that has failed me before.

I am really disappointed and feel failed by the hospital system as a safe and supportive system for birth.

While my whole experience was not traumatic, the lack of continuity and support that I experienced I think completely changed the outcome of my labour.

I requested no discussion of intervention unless I needed it in an emergency and spent so much time turning down an obstetrician with a different management in mind. I did not need this surgery and I did not need this pressure.

I did not need to be pressured with the fear of being responsible for a still birth. This is unacceptable.

Had I not felt pressure and coercion I think my baby would have come naturally and without the cascade of intervention which has left me with trauma and PTSD.

This has affected me personally, my intimate relationship and financially has cost so much to heal and repair from both physically and emotionally.

This needs to change!