

Submission  
No 543

## INQUIRY INTO BIRTH TRAUMA

**Name:** Name suppressed

**Date Received:** 9 August 2023

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Partially  
Confidential

This is such an important inquest and birth trauma is something that needs to be addressed. Health mummy and health baby is not the final point, and this is where many health professionals have the wrong view.

Currently, I am pregnant with my third baby with a private midwife being my primary carer and a home birth planned. I have never felt so at ease and comfortable with my choice in comparison to my first two pregnancies and births.

My first pregnancy started like anyone's first, exciting and a little bit nervous about how my body was going to grow a baby, birth a baby and feed a baby. My first appointment is one I will never forget. In [REDACTED] you have zero options you have to see your GP/Ob for care and in 2010 there were not many choices. The GP I saw was rude from the get-go. Advising we would look at booking in a date for a caesarean due to my partners height and my short stature it would be safest. I walked out of the room crying, I cried for days. My follow up appointments with this Dr were substandard, told I was having a big baby due to femoral length scaring me constantly, no education was provided on the tests/ultrasounds required I was just told you have to have this done at this time. Knowing what I know now this was not informed consent and I had options with all of this! The pregnancy cruised along pretty casually, and I continued to decline the major abdominal surgery the Dr wanted me to have for no reason. At 36 weeks and 2 days my waters broke, and I contacted the hospital.

I was advised to come for review the next morning. I attended for a review, and they confirmed that the membranes had ruptured. The Dr attended and advised the Midwife that he did not believe I had ruptured but if it would make the midwife happy, he would see me again the next day. The next day with further fluid noted on a pad I attended the hospital again solo, for the Dr to then tell me he was going to induce me with Prostin gel and just have the baby as the CTG was not great and the Midwife wanted him to do something. There was not a discussion nor information provided on this procedure just expectation that I would go along with it. I asked could they wait for my partner to arrive, and the Dr stated that he had a busy day in his consulting rooms and needed to do the prostin now so he could come back and give me a second dose in his break. I reluctantly agreed.

I called my partner, and I called my mum to come provide support. He came back in the afternoon walked in said OK your body is not doing anything on the bed I will give you another one. If it does not work, we will call Dr .... And he will attend to give you a caesarean tonight. The second prostin went in and my body kicked into labour not too long afterwards. I expressed to the midwife 4 hours later I wanted to have a bath and she ran it for me. The Dr attended and shouted at me to get out of the bath if I thought I had ruptured membranes I could not be in the bath, or I would give my baby an infection. He asked me to get on the bed and he would do a vaginal examination. Again, zero informed consent, however as the patient you trust the Dr because that's what we are told to do. He said I was only 5cm and should get an epidural. I did not want an epidural and declined.

I continued to labour and within an hour and half I felt the need to push the midwife told me that I did not and to just keep breathing. I again notified the midwife when I could feel the head in my vagina, and she was surprised that I had progressed as they were expecting a caesarean at handover time and had prepared everyone. The Dr came and said I had to push the baby out as quickly as possible as there were decelerations. He asked could he give me an episiotomy I declined. He persisted and told me my baby would die; this was whilst he was on the phone to the obstetrician who was coming from [REDACTED] saying I needed a caesarean. He did cut me, and I heard and felt it all it is a sound I will never forget. I was not allowed to hold my baby straight away and she was stunned so they took her away. My big baby that was the reason I needed all this intervention was born at a beautiful 3140grams. She was perfect!

My second pregnancy came as a surprise and again in [REDACTED] minimal choices available for care providers but at least this time I got to do one visit a booking in with a midwife. Booking in I always laugh at that terminology like am I booking in for a hotel room or what. The midwife was nice but definitely did not practice to her full scope.

This time around I got my Dr offside a little by reading more and informing myself on the various tests and ultrasounds within pregnancy and declining some options based on evidence-based literature. The pregnancy progressed unremarkably, with a smallish sized baby on scans. My baby was breech until around 37 weeks and then when he turned, he had significant decreased fetal movement. I went in for review and the midwife was great however the CTG was not reassuring, and the Dr reviewed and sent me home to return in the afternoon, it remained non reassuring in the evening, nor the next morning, nor the next afternoon when the midwife insisted they could not keep sending me home with a baby that was not moving and that had no reassuring factors.

The Dr even told the midwife he would not order an ultrasound as it was not necessary. I could hear the Dr speaking terribly to the midwife in the hallway and the midwife asked would I be happy to have an induction the next morning and she explained the rationale to me. I will be forever grateful to this midwife for advocating for me and my baby. I wish my story stopped here. Unfortunately, we went in for the induction all unremarkable and I laboured quite quickly when I advised during the transitional stage that I couldn't do this the Midwife and Dr present insisted I have morphine as I could not be that far along. The student midwife did a Vaginal examination and said I was 3 cm dilated. I declined the morphine and within 10 minutes was bullied into having this as they had already drawn it up and I was not going to make it through labour.

The morphine was given despite me declining and saying I needed to push, this was to stop me pushing in the words of the midwife. 15 minutes later my son was birthed vaginally earthside. My smaller baby on ultrasound was 3840g at birth. This still makes me laugh. I stayed in hospital as I was too sleepy from the morphine to do anything. The next morning, I notified the staff I had lost a large tennis ball size blood clot and was still bleeding into the toilet when they arrived. They advised it was normal and just because I had been in bed.

I had a slight temp, which the midwife said was because my milk was coming in the day after birth and took some bloods to make sure it was not an infection. I was discharged home with my blue book and record not stating anything about my birth or my blood loss. The next morning at 0730hours I received a phone call from my panicked GP telling me I had to come back in as my haemoglobin had gone from 120 to 69 and I must have a blood transfusion. When I asked why he said he was not sure as my blood loss at birth and afterwards was all normal. I certainly know why!! I declined to return to the hospital and instead found a wonderful GP in [REDACTED] who provided amazing support.

Due to these two experiences, the lack of care I believe I received, the lack of support, lack of education, nonexistence of the gold standard continuity midwifery care and so much reading of literature I have elected for continuity of care with a private midwife this time around and feel so supported and informed about my options. My partner and other children are involved and supported to ask as many questions as they need. I know that regardless of what happens this pregnancy even if things change and I do not get a homebirth I will have my midwife with me throughout who I trust immensely.