

Submission
No 545

INQUIRY INTO BIRTH TRAUMA

Name: Name suppressed

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Partially
Confidential

On the 9th of September 2014, I was in labour at XX Hospital with my first child. I was scared, but also elated, finally, after two miscarriages, I was going to hold a beautiful baby in my arms in a matter of hours. I could never have imagined that just a few days later I would be going home to choose a coffin for my baby.

My pregnancy had been deemed high risk due to insulin controlled Gestational Diabetes. A condition which we don't know enough about and absolutely can be fatal. As a result of having the diabetes, it was deemed I "needed" to give birth before 39 weeks. An induction was booked.

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I began active labour at 1am on the Wednesday 14th of September. I was hooked up to a CTG from that time to monitor baby. What no one told me was that as early as 1:05am, my baby was having abnormal heart patterns, slow recovery to baseline. I was exhausted, overwhelmed and in pain. I was told I had to lay on my left hand side and couldn't freely move due to the monitor. I had multiple staff perform internal checks, I later would find out they were trying to attach a fetal scalp monitor. This was not communicated to me. A decision was made around 10am to issue syntocinon. This decision killed my baby and cost myself and my husband a lifetime of unimaginable grief. The syntocinon never should have been given with my baby's heart rate in distress. The syntocinon effectively caused my contractions to ramp up which placed extra stress on my son.

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After pushing for what felt like days, I was told " We're taking you to theatre" no explanation. I was terrified of being cut open and didn't know what was going on. My baby was delivered. No Cry. No "Congratulations, you've had a boy" I later found out CPR was commenced then. Me crying out, screaming while cut open and thinking I would die from trying to sit up and look for my baby while cut open " where is my baby?, have I had a boy or girl?" A nurse pats my arm " It's ok". It wasn't ok. I was taken to recovery, still crying out for my baby, yet to see him. I was told a social worker would come. I was wheeled to the Special care nursery and overheard a nurse " They want to fly him to xx but I don't think he'll make the trip" This is how I found out how dire the situation was.

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He did survive the trip. It was only at xx hospital when the Neo natal neurologist sat down and said " Your baby has suffered brain damage during labour and won't be going home" we were formally told what was happening.

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We had 3 days with our boy. I was encouraged to hold him as he died. I hope you don't know what happens and what changes occur as a baby dies, but I do and I could not get out of that tiny NICU room fast enough.

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We were sent home with a box. A box of photo's and a blanket. We were sent home with a box.

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Three years later, the coronial Inquiry which we had to fight for concluded. Medical negligence killed my child. You wish to understand about birth trauma, how can I put my trauma in writing?

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Nearly 9 years on, I am yet to have a pap smear as I can't bear the thought of another internal examination. I can't find the words to express the anxiety and trauma I faced going back through antenatal clinic and going in for Caesareans for my next 3 babies. It's enormous. My birth trauma follows me in every aspect of my life. It is empty feeling in my arms, it is the heartbreak of watching my other children meet a milestone knowing my son never will because someone in the health system did not place a high enough value on my life or my son's life.

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That's all I can write but there is so much more. I can be contacted for a discussion of further input. Thank you for trying to do something.