

Submission
No 555

INQUIRY INTO BIRTH TRAUMA

Name: Name suppressed

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Partially
Confidential

I was 23 years old and expecting my first baby in 2010 .

After labouring all night I came into hospital at 7am .

I was met with a male midwife , who did a vaginal examination and told me I was only 1-2 cm dilated , this was my first vaginal examination in my life and having a male midwife was extremely uncomfortable . Struggling with intense back labour , I opted for a morphine injection . Baby was in a posterior position.

Once this wore off we tried again . This time it did not work . By 11pm I was stuck bent over in the shower , vomiting in pain . While the midwives chatted amongst themselves in the doorway about what they were planning on having to eat on their break . I was crying out for help .

My mother and husband felt helpless .

By 12pm I had lost all will and control and begged for an epidural . As the back labour pains would not budge .

I was told as there was no anaesthetist on site I would have to wait until they woken him up and he could drive to the hospital , as he was on call. I was made feel Guilty of disturbing him in the middle of the night . This took about 1-2hrs

The epidural had good effect, even though it took a longer than expected to be set up . As the midwives had not used the “new pumps” before .

By 7am the next day I was fully dilated and was told I could “ push “ . I was coached pushed , told to push into my bottom . I had no feeling and could feel no contractions and was not effectively pushing . A Locum doctor walked into the room . (My obstetrician I had seen throughout my pregnancy was over seas at the time . And the other obstetrician he referred me too was also away - just my luck) .

By 11am , the epidural had been turned off so I could feel mild contractions and push my baby out . Still with no effective pushing , the Locum said this is taking too long in an impatient tone , and he asked to use a vacuum to assist in birthing the baby’s head . I agreed.

After 3 failed pulls and pop offs , he moved onto forceps . At no point did he ask me for my consent to do forceps . He cut me , I needed an episiotomy . By this time as the epidural had worn off , I could feel everything . I was screaming hysterically , “ I didn’t want that , I didn’t want that “ . On repeat. My mum , and husband were holding my hand , wiping my tears trying to calm me down . I felt as if I had left my body and was looking down on myself . Forceps were used to birth the baby’s head . I have never felt so much pain or trauma , as if they were ripping my teeth out through my vagina :

My baby was born at 11:26 . Healthy . But stunned . I held this baby on my chest while the doctor then started stitching me up . This time the midwife advocated for me and asked for the epidural to be turned back on to give me some pain relief .

I asked my husband to take the baby . I couldn’t look at her . I was in pure shock .

My baby took 3 days to attach . She had a haematoma on her head . I was told nothing was wrong with her . The midwives seemed in shock , one telling my mother , that they didn’t expect that to happen.

Once at home , I would sob , mostly at night. Thinking about my birth trauma . I couldn't help it . I didn't bond with my baby . I would tell people never to have kids . I would never of chose to have a baby knowing the amount of trauma I had been through . I felt let down and powerless , no one listened to me . I then went on to struggle with postnatal depression .

It took me 6.5 years to fall pregnancy again. And this next pregnancy I was filled with extreme anxiety and dread the whole time . I would have a planned c-section, never would I go through that trauma again.