

Submission  
No 601

## INQUIRY INTO BIRTH TRAUMA

**Name:** Name suppressed

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Partially  
Confidential

My name is \_\_\_\_\_, I live in \_\_\_\_\_ I'm 49 years old and I have a 21 year old and a 10 year old.

The birth of my daughter was at \_\_\_\_\_ Hospital on 9.4.02. She was born 4 weeks early. My waters broke spontaneously at home, I was hospitalised and induced with syntocinon several hours later, I had a full labour. In the labour ward staff kept getting called away from me due to another mum-to-be having complications and needing attention.

I had forceps which failed, and vacuum which failed. Later I learned that the vacuum had torn me. The baby was stuck in the iliac fossa, she wasn't descending down the birth canal. Baby's heart rate was elevated too high - a monitor had been attached to her head and she was distressed. I was rushed for an emergency c-section. I had had an epidural earlier.

I could feel tugging and pulling but not pain.

I could feel my legs being held down - I could feel the baby being pushed upward - back up into my womb. It felt very forceful. I remember wondering why I could feel them pushing up through the vagina when I understood that the baby comes out through a cut at the front of the stomach. Even after the incisions had been made the baby was still wedged halfway down the birth canal between the pelvic bones from the pushing.. the vacuum and forceps had pulled her downward and she was stuck. That's why they had to push upward like that. The doctor literally had to 'yank' her out.

I remember the medical staff telling me to try and hold my legs down. It felt impossible with the pulling being so forceful. I had very sore leg muscles for days after.

I could feel my legs being held down.

I found out months later that I'd lost a lot of blood.

I remember being stitched, once with my legs down, then again with my feet up in high stirrups (external and internal).

When I was taken to recovery. I felt groggy, but there was no way I could doze off to sleep. I waited in recovery keeping my eyes open so I wouldn't go to sleep.

One of my family members who was with me during labour, recalls medical staff saying it was okay when the baby was stuck in the iliac fossa. The nurse was telling the doctor, and the doctor wasn't giving it the gravity it deserved, and wasn't acting on the information that was given.

I was in recovery for approximately 4 hours and didn't see my baby until I was taken to the maternity ward. My husband says he saw me in recovery for a short 10 minutes.

I was bedridden for the rest of the evening and the following day.. I hadn't had very much sleep at all in the days following and had trouble trying to breastfeed sitting up in bed. I was using the breast pump as well to try and stimulate my milk.

I got mobile after 2 days but still hadn't had much sleep. My baby had jaundice and had to have phototherapy. Bonding was hard because the baby had to spend so much time in the Bilibed and phototherapy crib, I got third day blues and tearful after unsuccessful breastfeeding attempts and feeling hot, flustered and incompetent.

On day 4 I had a panic attack. I pressed the emergency call button and I felt that I aggravated the hospital staff in doing this.

This, along with my extreme lack of sleep since my baby's birth were the first signs of things going amiss.

On day 5 I went outside again for the first time since giving birth.

Day 6 was my day of discharge. A nurse told me I was manic, that sent me into a panic as I didn't understand what manic meant. I slumped on the nurses' desk and blacked out, and found myself laying on the floor. I was belligerent and said if I wasn't discharged I'd leave anyway.

When I arrived home I was very teary. I was also experiencing post-labour contractions. My husband became alarmed at my behaviour. I couldn't sleep that night - I kept getting up and doing chores, eventually a short sleep eventuated.

on day 7, one week since giving birth, I experienced hallucinations, including olfactory hallucinations.

I had a doctors appointment that afternoon and he was very concerned about my insomnia, he prescribed some sleeping medication, but it didn't help me. Sleep to me felt impossible.

On day 10 I was diagnosed with a rare disorder; post-partum psychosis - a 1 in 1000 statistic. My condition was described as a sped-up turntable. Instead of running at a normal speed of 33, I was running at 78 - more than double the speed. With correct medication I would become well again.

I was so unwell and I feared I would never get back to my old self ever again.

Over this time I'd felt like I'd lost my mind!

I was admitted to [REDACTED] Acute Mental Health Facility from 19.4.02 to 29.04.02

I was put on haliperidol (serenace), it had many dreadful side-effects such as muscle/joint stiffness, dribbling, akathisia, restlessness, inability to concentrate, constipation, drowsiness and weight-gain.

I did start sleeping again and the hallucinations and strange behaviour stopped. Another symptom I had was believing in unrealistic ideas and losing touch with reality.

It was very hard work when I returned home, getting through the days took an astronomical effort.

I was going through paranoia, irrational fears. and fearing being alone with my baby - my confidence plummeted and I felt so inadequate as a mother.

A fear I had was that I was going to die because I couldn't open my bowels for a week, sometimes even longer. I had a phobia about being alone, and had panic attacks. I was very fidgety and it alarmed me how restless I was. My medication was changed to risperidone after 4 months. I started to feel a lot better after 4-5 months, but I began to suffer from depression soon after. I got help early, I had recognised it was depression.

By 7 months after my daughter's birth I was feeling well and remained well until just after Christmas. I became manic again and was admitted to [REDACTED] Acute Mental Health Facility, from 03.01.03 for around 10 days.

I was diagnosed with Bipolar 1 disorder and started taking Lithium. I also started Olanzapine (Zyprexa) which I was on for about a month.

When 10 months had passed since my daughter's birth , I had a pelvimetry and I found out I have cephalo-pelvic disproportion.

When 11 months had passed since my daughter's birth I suffered another episode of depression.

This account sums up 11 months of an extremely difficult, harrowing and fearful time in my life, with many serious health issues.

Note; I have been hospitalised several more times for bi-polar episodes, at:

██████████ Hospital Acute Mental Health Facility

██████████ hospital Acute Mental Health Facility

██████████ Hospital Sub-Acute Mental Health Facility

The birth of my son, who is now 10 years old, was also at ██████████ Hospital on 13.06.13

I had been admitted to hospital on 11.06.13 due to ruptured membranes and was scheduled for a c-section on 14.06.13. my waters broke fully and I went into labour. Things progressed very quickly and it was a race to get me ready to go to theatre for a c-section.

my son was presenting in breech position and his foot had come down and was compressing the umbilical cord. the midwife had her hand inside me, holding away his foot and stopping the cord from being compressed.

I had a general anaesthetic and my son was born 5 weeks early. He was rushed to the neo-natal unit in the hospital, and staff had to immediately attend to him as soon as he was born to give him oxygen and other interventions. He was born just before 7am and I remember waking from the anaesthetic around 11am.

When I saw my son for the first time, he had many leads and tubes connected to him, and he had an arm splint.

I did have bad vaginal pains around 5 days after giving birth.

When my son was 17 days old I was hospitalised again, at ██████████ Hospital Acute Mental Health Facility on 30.06.13 for a manic episode. My stay was for around 12 days. I could go across to the neo-natal unit to my son, until he was discharged a few days after my admission to mental health.

When my son was 3 years old he was diagnosed with autism and a developmental delay of 2 years