

Submission  
No 637

## INQUIRY INTO BIRTH TRAUMA

**Name:** Name suppressed

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Partially  
Confidential

The day before I was scheduled to be induced (for no medical reason, but my OB told me the hospital would be "too busy" for me on the days after the induction date), I went into labour spontaneously. I laboured at home from 3am-11pm before heading to the hospital where I was told I was 4cm. The midwife I had was kind and I can't fault her. I was in labour for 26 hours before I got an epidural, at 6cm dilated. The epidural allowed me to get the rest I needed, but slowed the progress of my labour down, so I was given a drop to keep my labour going. At 1pm I was 10cm dilated and was told I could start to push. I pushed for a full hour, giving absolutely everything I had, before the midwife called the registrar in to check on me. He told me my daughter would be born vaginally as her positioning was good, but to get him if another hour passed and she still wasn't here.

I pushed for another hour, and still she wasn't born. I had burst capillaries all over my face and eyes, my eyes felt as though they were going to pop out of my head with each push, but there was minimal movement. The registrar came back and said there was no need for a c section, but he was going to use a vontouse (vacuum) to suction onto her head and pull her out. He told me it was "perfectly safe, as long as I did 80% of the work" (which terrified me - if I hadn't made any progress in 2 hours, how was I to know if I was going to be able to do this safely for her). At this stage, her heart rate was also too high and not coming down. He attached the vontouse to her head and pulled, I felt her move down, and then stop.

He informed me that the vacuum had lost suction, and he wouldn't be able to reattach it safely, and that he would now use forceps. I was not given the opportunity to try to push her out now that she was far closer to the opening. He attached the forceps to her head, and I did not know this until my partner told me after she was born, that he braced his leg onto the bed as he pulled her out of me.

I was told I had a 1st degree tear, and I was stitched up by the registrar.

6 weeks after she was born, I told my GP I still felt extreme heaviness and pain in my vaginal area. I was told it was normal

12 weeks after she was born, I told my GP the heaviness wasn't getting better and I was sure I had a prolapse of some sort. I was told I was still healing and it was normal.

16 weeks after she was born, I sought out a women's health physio on my own, and was told that I had a weak but overactive pelvic floor which was why my pushing wasn't successful. I was diagnosed with a bladder prolapse likely caused by the forceps. I was told by the physio that I was lucky my pelvic floor muscle hadn't been torn from the bone completely. I was told they should have taken me for a c section, and I was told due to my scar tissue and the fact that I needed stitches at all, that she would be very surprised if it was in fact, just a first degree tear, and that in her opinion it was likely a second degree tear at least.

At 6 months postpartum I revisited the women's health physio due to still having a lot of pain in my scar tissue, and the fact I could physically not have sex due to both the pain and extreme tightness I now had. I had to do a series of laser treatments on my scar tissue to loosen it up, and will have a prolapse for the remainder of my life now unless I have it surgically repaired.

The physical, mental and emotional toll the extreme pain I felt in the postpartum period affected me greatly and I believe it contributed to my postpartum anxiety and depression.

The toll over 6 months of not being able to have sex with my partner had on our relationship was hard on top of having a new baby and still trying to connect as a couple. And the financial strain that multiple physio appointments and treatments cost caused is a lot of stress also.

I wasn't told what to look out for post delivery in regards to abnormal pain or heaviness etc. I would have been able to access help sooner and possibly reduced the long term damage I got.