

Submission
No 588

INQUIRY INTO BIRTH TRAUMA

Name: Name suppressed

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Partially
Confidential

In 2019 I was induced due to gestational diabetes. While I was explained that it was going to happen, at the time of booking there was no discussion and the OB I was seeing who I had never seen before (public system) simply called and booked it in. I arrived at the hospital at 7am to have the cerclage tape inserted and was told I had to stay at the hospital all day and overnight. But there was no bed for me so for hours my husband and I walked all the way around the hospital non stop. No one checked or monitored me at any point. In the afternoon I started feeling early contractions but when I moved into the antenatal room - a shared room with 5 other women, I again was not checked.

I felt frustrated as I did feel contractions intensifying and wasn't sure what to expect being a first time mum. The nurse that we asked to put a monitor or check me in any capacity was annoyed that I had asked her to do so. I simply wanted to be validated and also just know what was going on. They gave me painkillers and sleeping tablets and simply told me to sleep because nothing will happen in the morning. When my waters broke at 1am the nurse I called in told me to shower and then said that I am not to call my husband. That I will be staying in this bed until it was time for my induction in the morning. She then looked at me and said 'hopefully your body will labour on its own because induction hurts a lot more.'

I felt this was an awful thing to say. In the next few hours my pains intensified and I just wanted my husband or someone to be with me. All I remember in those hours was again this same nurse/midwife did an internal and told me I was only 2cms so there's no reason for me to go downstairs. She put a cannula in my arm again no explanation or permission asked. Whenever I buzzed for help it was like I was being an inconvenience and this nurse made me feel as though I did not have the capacity to give birth and was being weak. I was made to stay in bed for a few hours until another midwife saw me and said I think it's time to get you downstairs for some more pain relief. I could finally call my husband and be up and moving. The next hour was a blur again and I ended in an emergency c-section but at that time I had already progressed to 8cms.

My body was clearly doing something even though it didn't align to her standards of measurement. My consecutive labours have been the same - intense pain with no progress and then suddenly fully dilated. I still think about that night and how this nurse made me feel. I felt like I was an inconvenience, made to feel not capable enough and this flowed into my BF journey and motherhood. While I recovered I was not in a good headspace for a good 6 months post delivery. I had lost all confidence in myself and felt like nothing I was doing for my daughter was good enough.