

Submission
No 586

INQUIRY INTO BIRTH TRAUMA

Name: Name suppressed

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Partially
Confidential

My first birthing experience was not as I expected. I had been booked into the birth centre at a Sydney hospital and when my labour spontaneously began I was told the birth centre was full that night and was directed to a completely different hospital. I did not have any familiar face. No known and trusted midwife or doula to support me in this change. My partner and I only had each other and did not know what to expect as this was our first birth.

I had vowed not to use any type of pain relief but , in the change of course and unfamiliar surroundings I felt different now- my confidence was knocked , and I felt unsafe and uncomfortable. I asked for an epidural. It was accepted with no questions asked. I didn't experience the warmth from a friendly supportive midwife. Most had poor communication skills . No one spoke to me , only in and out of the room to monitor monitor monitor. I'm aware that this is hospital policy. My labour slowed down and a cascade of interventions followed and after 14 hours I was advised to have an emergency CS. So I did. I didn't know any better I followed the advice of doctors that repeatedly kept coming into the room of which felt like they were repeatedly threatening a CS until eventually I was too tired to resist.

I had the CS. It went fine. I carried on and brought my baby home and healed and didn't reflect back on my experience once. Until my second pregnancy. I knew I didn't want the same experience as before because deep down I know things could have been prevented. I got informed, learned about how the hospital maternity system works in Australia, learned about interventions and effects they have on natural physiological birth.

My second birth was completely different. It was peaceful. It was shorter. I was surrounded by my chosen people. No intervention necessary. One midwife throughout. It was at home.

My hopes in writing this submission is that you understand what women need in maternity care. They need midwifery led care. In hospital or at home. Not all women can birth at home or in a birth centre due to certain high risk factors. They also need midwifery led care. Doulas are vital to families in ensuring support during this time especially in hospital where it can be a very scary time for couples particularly when faced with scare tactics from health professionals. We know this goes on. It is vital that there is enough funding in this area to provide all women this opportunity to birth in the most empowering form in which they are comfortable doing.

If I had been more educated going into my first birth I know things would have been different. Things are not and I must live with what happened. But for me, I had the opportunity to experience a natural birth that I so longed for. I am fortunate enough to have been able to afford to hire a private midwife to birth at home. Many are not. Birth is part of a women's mind body and soul on such a deep level that she takes with her forever. If it's traumatic , that experience never leaves her. It's a form of grief. That is something that people need to realise.

The statistics are there ,please make a change.

Thank you for reading.. #enough