

Submission
No 655

INQUIRY INTO BIRTH TRAUMA

Name: Name suppressed

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Partially
Confidential

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Committee Secretariat
Select Committee on Birth Trauma
NSW Parliament
Macquarie Street
Sydney NSW 2000
birthtrauma@parliament.nsw.gov.au
Re: Inquiry on Birth Trauma

Dear Chair,

I am a NSW resident and birthing person and I would like to make a submission to your inquiry on birth trauma.

I birthed in [REDACTED] Hospital in August 2022. I spent most of my labour at home and the final 2 hours in the hospital giving birth to my daughter. The midwife who assisted me did a good job and everything went fairly well until I had given birth. Once I had birthed and was waiting to birth my placenta I had another 2 midwife's in the room. One of them continued to probe my stomach (without consent, without saying what she was doing etc). The contractions to birth my placenta were quite intense and I verbalised this. The same midwife then pressed very hard on my stomach and I then birthed my placenta. Although I don't know for sure in interfering and doing this she caused the placenta to come out earlier than it normally would, this then led to additional bleeding as there was still membrane or something that hadn't come out. The bleeding continued and then a doctor had to come in. They asked about putting in a canular and catheter both of which I said no to. I did not under any circumstances want a catheter! They kept on asking and then I had to have the canular and they ended up putting in a catheter. The doctor got the bleeding under control (I didn't even end up losing that much blood, between 700-800mls)!

What was worst about the experience was that during this my legs were in stirrups and the doctor was touching/trying to assist to get the last of the membrane or something out. She said 'give her the gas' as I was moving a lot and I said I didn't want any. I had just had a natural pain free birth, the last thing I wanted was any drugs. She said to stay still and said it quite harshly, I know the next likely wasn't meant that way but the doctor proceeded to state if I didn't take the gas or be still that she would proceed to take me to theatre to sort things out.

I remained still for the remainder of the procedure. But that's all she had to say in the beginning was please be still. She didn't say that once before mentioning gas etc.

The stay in hospital was horrible, I asked more than once about having the catheter removed and was told that we had to wait for so many hours which then extended to the next day and that the midwife's had to get permission from the doctor. This made my initial recovery horrible and so uncomfortable.

Birth trauma has had a profound impact on my life in those initial stages of becoming a new mum. I wanted to leave hospital as soon as possible I didn't feel like I was being listened too and I feel as though this had a direct impact on my mental health and breastfeeding in the early days.

After birth, we didn't receive follow up care relating to breastfeeding and issues with health and issues with reoccurring mastitis. We are part of a two week follow up midwife program. As we live out of the catchment area these were only phone calls and one hospital visit for weight check. After the first visit and phone call out breastfeeding journey was really difficult. In the 10 days of the last 14 period I called the number for a mid wife 5-7 times with no answer and no return call. I called the hospital and was promised a return phone call on more then one occasion, I received no phone call. I thought I was getting mastitis and called the number (got through to someone), they said to go the gp and they would call again tomorrow. No one ever called.

After I recovered from mastitis I was still struggling with feeding and didn't know what to do, this was around 11-12 days postpartum. I called the hospital after no answer from the mid wife line. The person I spoke to was rude, belittling and said to call [REDACTED] nurses. Please know I was crying on the phone trying to get some help and all I was offered was a rude call someone else.

Because of this I do not feel safe to birth in a hospital or be part of any mainstream midwife program if I ever fall pregnant again. I was so discouraged with the care I received after having my daughter and still have horrible feelings and flash backs to it one year late.

Thank you for holding this inquiry. I look forward to seeing the outcome and hopefully a substantial improvement in reducing birth trauma in NSW and beyond.

Sincerely,