

Submission  
No 859

## INQUIRY INTO BIRTH TRAUMA

**Name:** Name suppressed

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Partially  
Confidential

I did my General Nursing & Midwifery Certificates from 1959 - 1964.

Worked in a Rural town in both General & Midwifery when I finished. This was quite stressful as a young single Midwifery Nurse as a lot of the time you were the only midwife on duty with not many Midwifery trained nurses & had to work 12 hour shifts & then ON Call if no Midwife on duty. We also had a very Premature baby to tube feed as well as do the General Ward work & admit Mothers ready for delivery.

There was no Dr. at hospital you had to call the GP when a mother came in & was about to deliver. On one occasion an anaesthetic was needed for the mother when Forceps was required. The Dr talked me through the drip method of using Ether on a mask while he did the delivery!

Thank goodness the mother & the baby survived & I saw the "baby" about 30 years later & he was a successful business man so our delivery didn't hamper him in any way!

In 1972 I got married when I was 31 but had difficulty falling pregnant. Had a Miscarriage, then fell Pregnant at 35. I was considered "an Elderly Primipara"!

My Dr, was in \_\_\_\_\_ over an hour away. I was overdue so got induced. Unfortunately it was a time when about 7 of us were waiting to deliver!

They took me up to deliver when near fully dilated. Then I was a bit slow so I had to move off delivery bed, back to ward while another was about to give birth!

This happened to me several times & then my contractions weren't so strong.

I could feel my baby moving a lot and knew that was a sign of distress, my Amniotic fluid was also a green colour another sign of stress so I asked the sisters in Charge to phone my Dr. By this time it was about 3am & they said they wouldn't do it because it wasn't that long before she had been to the hospital! (She hadn't seen me.)

I said, "Well I'll get up & phone her because my baby is distressed & I want a live baby!"

Anyhow they phoned her, she came & apologised & did a Forceps delivery but my big 9lb boy only had a 2 APGAR reading which meant he was pretty flat. She got me to monitor his cry in case he had a brain injury! They kept him in the Nursery the next day while I expressed milk then the next day I was allowed to try & feed him which didn't go so well.

I was determined to try & feed him but didn't get a lot of help. I was pretty sore from the Perineal tear too. I was kept in hospital for a week. Sent home with a formula for the baby. A lot of the staff were single & didn't have children or hadn't breast feed, their children, so weren't a lot of help.

When I got back home on the farm, had a very supportive husband and had an excellent Baby Health Clinic Sister at        rooms who was a great help.

She had been a mother & successfully fed her children. She gave me lots of hints and also the diet I should be on to help milk production. ( Being a Dairy Farmer's daughter I knew how feed helped milk production!) Anyhow when I got home I relaxed, got on a good diet and fed my baby until 7 months when I fell pregnant again & milk supply went down quickly so put him on a bottle/cup.

With the Perineal tear I wasn't given Post natal exercises and sometimes had leaking of urine & faeces, if I couldn't get to a toilet quickly. Later I saw a Physio & did Pelvic Floor exercises.

For the second delivery I had it at my local Small Rural Hospital. My Dr was an Indian who had done lots of deliveries & the midwives were also mothers who had breast fed their babies. It was a beautiful delivery. Again I was induced but baby only 8lbs and the Dr Just made it in time! The baby was put on breast immediately and I fed her for 13months. A lot better bonding with baby too.

My friend & I started a Mothercare Group in our Community and helped many new Mums. It was a beaut support group. A lot were farmers so we would just tell them to watch what the calves & cows do. They don't wait every 4 hours to give the calf a drink! The calves just drink when they want one! They then understood what to do!

Following the births I had a Prolapsed Uterus so had a Hysterectomy & Vaginal Repair and 10 years later had a prolapsed Bladder & Rectocele and Mesh was used.

Following this have had trouble with the Mesh.

The Trauma from the original birth & the Mesh has made intercourse painful and not a good outcome for a loving marriage.

I feel a lot more could be done with training Midwives and Doctors. Also a need to train more Midwives. It needs mothers to talk to the students about the problems later in life if the birth is difficult and the problems. Also how to successfully feed a baby and Mothercare help. I know as a single Midwife I didn't have the same expertise as I had after having children!

Also the importance of Pelvic Floor exercise & ways Sex may be more enjoyable for those who have had a traumatic delivery.

Certainly a need for MORE Nurses in Pre & Post Natal Care and in Delivery ward.

Outreach services needed for those in Rural areas like the one I live in when the Midwifery section of hospitals have closed.

This causes the wife to often have to live away from family if she is close to delivery. This disrupts family life. Rural Mothers and families are disadvantaged by the Centralising of Midwifery Centres.

I hope my story will help other mothers, fathers, children, families, Medical Practitioners to have a better experience with Childbirth and Politicians will learn that something has to be done to make life better for Australian families, especially Rural families.

Post Natal Depression is another condition that should be discussed. I've noticed it seems to happen in some families. Is it Genetic? Certainly help is needed, especially in Rural Australia.

Drugs in Pregnancy also a big Problem and not successfully addressed.

Also Diabetes in Pregnancy. Need for importance of Diet & exercise in Pregnancy.

Refugee and Aboriginal women have Special Needs too. I hope these will be addressed.

Congratulations for having this enquiry. I hope it has a successful outcome.