

**Submission
No 683**

INQUIRY INTO BIRTH TRAUMA

Name: Miss Rhiannen Sugars

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I was classed as high risk so my local hospital was unable to care for me. This meant having to travel an hour in dangerous country roads whilst in labour.

I experienced PROM and the Ob was respectful of my choices and desire to wait it out.

The following morning I had a midwife come marching into my room & demand why the pitocin drip hadn't been started yet. I told her I wanted to wait and the OB was okay with this plan. She told me there was no point dragging it out. She coerced into starting just "a little bit of pitocin" and refused to leave my room until I agreed.

The drip failed to start for 20 minutes, until my husband pointed there was air in the line. It was my husband, not the midwife, who moved the air.

Contractions got intense fast and the midwife told me it was too early to be feeling pushy, despite the fact I had a feeling bub was moving quickly & fast labours are common in women like myself who have connective tissue disorders.

The pain got too much and I asked for fentanyl. The midwife went to get the anaesthetist who arrived & started talking about an epidural. I told him I didn't want one, that I wanted fentanyl. He said that the midwife had told him I wanted an epi & looking at the level of pain I was in, it might be a better fit.

I do not remember to agreeing to an epidural. I don't remember signing for it. But it happened. Halfway through, I entered transition and started screaming from the pain of sitting while my daughter tried to crown. The pain was so intense, I almost fainted and people were holding me up and telling me to keep still because the needle was still in place.

Not a single person in the room recognised I was in transition. They told me that the pain would go away soon as they laid me down. The sensible midwife said call the OR for an emergency C section, bub is having reverts. It was the student midwife who noticed the birth fluids underneath me as they moved me and checked me, yelling "head!". Despite being comfortable on my side, I was forced onto my back and bub was born in 2 pushes with help from the Fetal ejection reflexion. They were all yelling at me to slow down, oblivious to the fact my body had taken over.

My labour ended up being 52 minutes, total. I ended up with significant tearing and stitches for 6 weeks. I was robbed of my peaceful VBAC and of my postpartum period due to the discomfort I was in from the stitches and the trauma from my birth.

Women are not safe in the birth suite. We are not respected. We do not deserve to birth on fear. We do not deserve to have the happiest moments of our lives turning into the most traumatic. Birth is natural but the medical mindset has ruined it.