

**Submission
No 694**

INQUIRY INTO BIRTH TRAUMA

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My first birth came on so suddenly, when my husband rang the birth unit they said well it's a bit early but she sounds distressed so bring her in. When we got there they had a student midwife take my temperature but the thermometer wasn't working so they kept on trying and had to go find a different thermometer while I was begging to get into the shower but they said they had to get my temperature first.

I had no idea that I could've just gotten off the bed and just jumped into the shower.

My temperature was finally taken and it was fine and I was told they had to see how far I had dilated. During the vaginal examination I had a contraction and it was so painful I asked her to stop but she said she had to wait until the contraction had finished. I was already 6cm.

Not long after I said I'm so sorry I've just wet the bed, and she said oh no that'll be your waters breaking I gave you a stretch and sweep while I was in there. For some reason she thought it was necessary to give a stretch and sweep (which I didn't consent to as I wasn't even asked) to a woman in active labour who was already 6cm dilated.

I was finally allowed in the shower but as soon as I stood up I had the urge to push. They said don't push its too soon you're not ready yet.

Everything was happening so quickly and I was so panicked I felt like I had no control over my body and I was terrified. My husband was so stressed he almost fainted so he was sitting in the corner while my mum supported me in the shower. Another midwife came in unannounced and started talking to me while I was naked in the shower - thank goodness my mum was there she turned around and said "excuse me?! Who are you?!".

I remember sitting on the bed begging for an epidural while the midwives were getting some sort of trolley ready in the corner. They didn't even acknowledge me they just looked at my husband (who was half passed out in the other corner) and said "did she want one before she came in?" And when he said no they continued to ignore me.

My mum finally asked when they were going to check me again and they said they only check every four hours. Mum said I don't think she's got that long I had fast births too. So they checked me again and no surprises I was fully dilated. So they got me to start pushing on my back and one of the midwives yelled at me because I wouldn't keep my leg pulled up because it kept cramping. I turned around to hold the back of the bed and push and then they said baby's heart rate is going down and not coming back up so we're going to have to move you. I said after this contraction and with two pushes my daughter flopped out onto the bed with no one ready to catch her.

I started violently shaking from the shock of such a fast birth. I remember a midwife saying "this injection helps the placenta come out" without explaining any risks - it shouldn't have even been needed since I had a completely physiological birth I should have been allowed a physiological third stage.

A male doctor who I had never met before came to check me for tears and stitched up my second degree tear. During my booking appointment I had informed my hospital that I had been a victim of sexual assault so it should have been in my file. I was uncomfortable with this strange man having his fingers in my vagina during this very vulnerable time and he just scolded me telling me to "stop flinching you can't even feel anything".

When the midwives came back to do my daughters measurements and vaccinations, she started crying from the needle so I started crying - the midwife got angry at me and said something along the lines of "vaccinations save lives don't cry". I wasn't upset about the vaccination I was emotionally sensitive because the daughter I had just given birth to was upset and I felt for her.

I had arrived at the hospital at around 11:30am and gave birth at 1pm. So many people had said to me how lucky I was to have such a fast birth but it was an absolutely terrifying experience. I wish just one person at the hospital had sat down next to me and held my hand and told me it was going to be okay and I could do this. The whole time I felt like no one was listening to me, no one was interested in supporting me and they were doubting I even felt what was happening to my body.