

Submission
No 864

INQUIRY INTO BIRTH TRAUMA

Name: Name suppressed

Date Received: 15 August 2023

Partially
Confidential

15th August 2023

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 mother and I would like to make a submission to your inquiry on birth trauma.

On the 8th February 2022 I gave birth to my beautiful son at the _____ Hospital, And while I have no direct trauma from the birthing process, I have ongoing physical and emotional trauma post birth.

My labour was induced due to complications so it all happened pretty quickly. The only pain relief I used, or wanted, was the gas in the early stages. My midwife was very supportive of my wishes not to use anything more and I never asked for more during the birth and have no regrets.

My labour was very intense and my son had some difficulties coming out. His head got stuck on my cervix which resulted in the midwife having to reach inside me and stretch my cervix over his head. And while I have no hard feeling towards this process, and understand that things like this sometimes need to happen, I believe this is where my problems began.

My son came out very quickly, resulting in tearing around my entire labia minora, and while this has healed physically, I still struggle mentally knowing the damage that was done. This has resulted in my not wanting to be intimate with my husband as I no longer feel attractive knowing what my husband has seen. And although he assures me this is not the case, it is something I struggle with internally.

Moving forward, I developed a prolapse of the bladder, rectum and cervix which I have been seeing a physiotherapist about since my son was about 12 weeks old. This was most likely cause my the intervention taken when stretching my cervix over my sons head during labour. This has caused problems in toileting some days. I also suffer painful pelvic floor spasms

regularly due to the muscles overworking to hold everything together which affects my daily life. I am often unable to function properly for up to an hour while I wait for the spasm to pass.

Having the prolapse causes not only physical distress (like loss of bladder control when coughing and sneezing, or difficulty passing stools most days) but the emotional distress is also very real. The feeling of being broken, and not wanting my husband to know due to the shame and embarrassment, takes its toll.

With this inquiry, I would like to see more support and education for mothers and their partners pre birth to prepare them for the complications that can arise during and after labour.

Access to pelvic floor physio BEFORE giving birth, such as group sessions like we would see in birthing classes, to teach women how to relax their muscles correctly while pushing would be of great benefit and could possibly prevent the damage being done during birth in the first place. Even giving expectant parents information about pelvic floor physio during pregnancy and letting them know this service is available would help as, until learning about my prolapse, I was unaware this even existed. If I had known this as available, I likely would have pursued it privately to prepare myself better for labour.

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.

While I am happy to share my story I would like my information to stay private and I do not wish to give evidence at hearing.

Sincerely,