

Submission
No 722

INQUIRY INTO BIRTH TRAUMA

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Partially
Confidential

In December 2017 I gave birth at _____ Midwifery Group Practice, while the birth and aftercare here was fine – albeit I was told often to be quiet and that I was ‘carrying on”, I was transferred to the _____ Hospital for surgical repair of a 3B tear. I signed a waiver for a blood transfusion.

Upon arrival I was physically brutalised when the attending nurses/midwives from the _____ attempted to encourage the ragged membranes be eliminated from my freshly birthed womb by pressing and rubbing incredibly hard, down towards my bladder. I could feel the fluids being forced from my body and was screaming in pain while they told me to be quiet. I could see them catching the blood and amniotic fluid on a bluey while it flooded out of me. Eventually when my partner and newborn arrived, I was offered gas and then told I was going to be given an epidural to undergo surgery. I opted for anaesthetic as I did not want an epidural. I signed another waiver for a blood transfusion.

Upon awakening from anaesthetic, I was met by a doctor on duty who yelled at me that antibiotics save lives, and my newborn daughter was in NICU due to my poor decisions (declining group B Strep Testing) – My daughter did not have group B strep, and was diagnosed less than 24 hours later with Transient Tachypnea of the newborn – which did not require antibiotics. This doctor was just as rude to my husband who had also just had to watch me scream in pain while the previous nurses brutalised my body.

In the hours after, I was denied food, assistance to go to the toilet – although I was also told that I had to stay in bed as I had lost too much blood to walk around.

When being administered antibiotics I asked if I could eat or drink as I had not eaten or hydrated since 9pm the night before (this was around 6am) and they laughed and said the antibiotics were intravenous so an empty tummy didn’t matter.

When I was meant to be bonding and connecting with my new baby - I was told I wasn’t allowed to go down to see my baby in NICU (on another floor in the hospital) to feed her as I wasn’t allowed to go alone because there was no one who could take me. My husband had been sent home and was told not to come back until visiting hours.

When I was unable to hold on to go to the toilet any longer I took myself down to the bathrooms and fainted, when I came to I pressed the buzzer and no one ever came. I laid on the bathroom floor of the hospital covered in my own blood and urine, having just given birth 12 hours before. The cleaner on shift helped me back to my bed. The cleaner had more compassion than majority of the staff in this ward.

I was left a voicemail by the NICU nurse if I didn’t go to feed my baby “they would be giving her formula whether I liked it or not”. When I called to explain that I was trying to get down there she tutted and hung up on me.

What was meant to be a time where I felt supported and held I felt like a piece of garbage and a burden.

Birth trauma has impacted my physical body with scarring from the surgical repair on my tear. I have been left disfigured and must live with this for the rest of my life. Any type of surgery to repair this is elective and incredibly costly and when I brought this up with the _____ I was told it's not their problem.

In 2020 chose to have a homebirth for my second pregnancy and did not step foot in the hospital for the delivery of my baby – and I have had absolutely no issues. I do not think this is a coincidence.