

Submission  
No 729

## INQUIRY INTO BIRTH TRAUMA

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Partially  
Confidential

COVID delayed my wedding so my husband and I decided to try for a baby "in the meantime".

We fell pregnant VERY quickly.

I was almost instantly nauseous. Which as I am a midwife myself I was instantly suspicious.

We had a dating scan at approx 7 weeks and found out we were having MCDA twins. I fell INSTANTLY into a pit of despair knowing the potential risks to my babies lives and mine and the unknown of our journey.

I would be birthing at the level tertiary hospital that I myself work at. However the mode of care was not what I was hoping. I was hoping to be a part of the caseload program or MGP however due to being VERY high risk was unable to be on caseload.

The pregnancy itself was very complicated, scary and in all honesty awful. My preconceived ideas of a particular journey were ruined. Stress over complications with BOTH babies and myself were a daily problem. Trying to continue full time work as a midwife was traumatic and stressful. I was told by the MFM consultant in charge of my case to cease work at 28 weeks... but with my husband a full time uni student how is that possible?

Skipping forward to 35 weeks pregnant. I was booked for an induction of labour due to significant growth discrepancy with my babies. I was booked for Friday however came on Thursday for my foley's catheter. I was found to be 3cm dilated and was so excited knowing this was a great start for the next day and not needing the foley's. However my BP was elevated. Blood tests were attended and it was found that I had severe fulminating Pre eclampsia and had to be delivered ASAP or risk kidney failure, seizure or stroke. Unfortunately due to staffing issues in the NICU I was told I needed to be transferred out to a different hospital before delivery. I was SHATTERED my entire pregnancy was hell and now the one "comfort" I had was being taken away, everything was spiralling at this point.

While waiting for the patient transport to the other side of the city I became more and more unwell. I was close to having an eclamptic seizure. A neurotoxic medication (Magnesium Sulphate) was commenced to prevent me from having a seizure. I was still pushing for a normal birth of my twins however as I became more unwell I knew there was no other way for the 3 of us to survive. I signed the consent for a LSCS. This was one of the single worst moments in my life I gave up all my control of my experience.

I was raced to OT which I do not remember due to the neurotoxicity state I was in. An arterial line needed to be inserted due to my compromised state however due to this compromise it was difficult. I was physically held down by one of my closest friends/colleagues for 5 attempts of an arterial line before success. I sat most naked in a bright room in front of people I worked with daily.

I have personally witnessed hundreds of LSCS but feeling it while compromised was the worst day of my life.

The people around me were unbelievably incredible however my babies were being pulled out of me in an unnatural fashion. I felt the life drain from me as I had a PPH. I spent minimal to no time with my babies as they were raced off to an unstaffed NICU a place I knew I couldn't get to for >24h (as I would have to be in an ICU or a fire care area due to the Magnesium sulphate).

My babies were gone. I was alone.

In recovery I was alone I had to yell to recovery nurses to call the birth unit to ask what was happening. My friend and colleague came and stayed with me writing her notes (staying well past her shift time to be with me).

My lactate level was very high and I was to go to ICU. I begged to return to birth unit in the acute care area so I was in a place I knew and vaguely close to my babies. Thankfully my lactate level just past and I returned to birth unit. I stayed there for >36h.

Due to understaffing in the NICU my babies A. Were not looked after in a way I wished B. Discharged earlier then they should have (at the time I thought this was great but in the long run it was detrimental to them) C. I spent minimal time with my babies for the first 24-36h not only because of the understaffing but also my condition a burden I will have to wear forever.

I suffered from major PND and PTSD (ongoing) due to my near death experience. I also feel like a failure and feel like I was robbed from so much.

My postnatal experience did end there. One of my twins had massive complications that saw me doing CPR on her twice at one and once in ED. She had two life saving surgeries by the age of 6months. My PTSD and PND accelerated! They were the only people keeping me alive. If they didn't need me I would have definitely killed myself due to the trauma.

I absolutely loath what happened to me, my girls and my family. We can never get that time back. I will forever hate the day I had my babies which is so bloody conflicting.