

**Submission
No 747**

INQUIRY INTO BIRTH TRAUMA

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Happy to provide more detail, but in short, in all three of my labours the nurses/midwives were overwhelmed and overworked, and also under-educated in labour techniques so therefore unable to provide any appropriate advice or situation-specific attention.

I was extremely lucky that out of my own fear of childbirth (having already lost an Aunty to haemorrhage post-birth and hearing my mum's horror story of her Dr being too busy to come to her induction/super fast labour as a 17yo because he was busy playing golf) I read a lot on the physiology and saved my children's lives myself, as well as kept myself relatively intact. Many of my friends weren't as lucky.

Labour #2

In Labour #2, the midwives neglected to observe, mention, or suggest any different approach to the fact that my daughter was in posterior position. I literally wasn't told until I read the paperwork afterwards. They paid no attention to the lack of progress or my exhaustion, until the last minute where they decided to give me an episiotomy so they could use forceps without my consent - luckily I didn't allow this to go ahead and it gave me the renewed energy to get up on all fours on the bed to push her out within 3 x pushes, HOWEVER they had left it too late and she already had anoxia/hypoxia and they spent over 3+ minutes panicking to try to revive her. She now has Dyslexia which I 100% believe is due to this incident. Worse, this happened in front of my older daughter and parents, who were already traumatised from the recent loss of my newborn nephew (from identified CHD) and thought they were losing my newborn daughter too.

Labour #3

In my Labour #3 I repeatedly told the nurses I was already in transition, my contractions were 1 x minute long, <2 minutes apart and labour had already advanced naturally/fast before I went to hospital. They absolutely didn't believe me, didn't listen to me, didn't check my dilation for over an hour despite me telling them I was about to give birth - when I finally got a bed to be examined they asked why I hadn't come earlier, and insinuated it was my fault that I had a tear. The midwife then started sewing me up, without any anaesthetic, to which I objected and asked her to wait for anaesthetic to kick in - she said I should stop complaining because she was "just trying to help".

Labour #1

In Labour #1 I was induced 2 x weeks early due to suspected placental abruption, in the 1st few minutes they pushed the emergency button and said I'd need an emergency caesar because the cord was around Bub's neck - then backtracked, said it was a false alarm and to go ahead (without as many words or explanation, basically just causing my husband to panic then walking out).

There was no explanation at any time about how induction works, so again I'm extremely glad I had read this all in detail beforehand to expect the strong frequent oxytocin induced contractions. I was also very glad I didn't follow their instruction to just lie flat on my back and die from agony whilst irreparably damaging my pelvic floor - instead, I pulled the mattress off the bed, layered all the pillows I could find and gave birth on all fours.

In NONE of my births (I did the hospital training for all 3) did I receive any advice or instructions on natural ways to speed up each stage of labour, what the indicators are of each stage, any natural pain management methods, what warning signs to be aware of. They never explained stages, suggested changing position - I did it all myself, choosing to put on the TENS, run a shower, bounce on the medicine ball.

The thing I find absolutely insane, after having done it 3 x times naturally now, is the entire notion of women sitting or lying on their back in a bed to give birth.

On no planet is this a natural way to give birth, or reduce/survive extreme pain. In fact, it causes physical damage and slows labour. It should be illegal to even show women on movies giving birth on their backs, it's so against natural physiology.

Birth preparation needs to include more practical and proven advice, with the goal of the fastest safest natural labour for both mother and child.

I still absolutely don't regret going to public hospital, because EVERY ONE of my friends who went private either had episiotomy or emergency caesareans.

Again, this is unnatural - interventions like caesarean should be required in closer to 15% of births. Episiotomy and instruments are also drastically overused due to a lack of education and frankly, laziness of the medical teams in Australia. Tearing is in fact more natural, heals better, can be controlled and prevented with correct attention. This inquiry should focus on how these interventions should be reduced, and instead how increased education on basics like gravity, physical activity, psychological pain blocking etc will help more women achieve a natural labour they can walk away from and recover from without long lasting permanent injuries to themselves and their babies.