

Submission
No 760

INQUIRY INTO BIRTH TRAUMA

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Partially
Confidential

I had a traumatic birth in the public hospital system. 4th July 2019, at Hospital (hospital) my son was born.

I was 23 years old, no complications, healthy young very active.

My baby was healthy no complications and thriving. I was apart if the public system, so you see whoever on shift for appointments (midwife or obstetrician).

At 39.5 weeks I went into spontaneous labour. Excited to meet my healthy baby. My waters broke and they were healthy and clear. I was instructed to go to the hospital to confirm (already showing that the hospital system doesn't trust women and their instincts)

It was confirmed it was my waters and I was sent home to labour by a midwife.

3 hours later I had a phone call my a demanding obstetrician to come back into hospital and I must be induced with Pitocin to get the baby out as soon as possible. Naive I went in.

I had a birth checklist on all the things I wanted during my labour and birth.

The obstetrician on shift (Dr came into the room and quote "you are to be induced, we need to get this baby out or he will die" "if you don't cooperate with what we are telling you, you need to go elsewhere" (this was due to waters being broken for 6 hours already and their argument was it was a risk to infection for baby, due to being tested positive to Step B four weeks prior) knowing what I know now, firstly, I was a product of the hospital system. Policy based NOT EVIDENCE. I was never given informed consent and was scared into doing whatever they wanted.

I was told I wasn't allowed water as a form of pain relief.

My induced labour with pitocin was absolutely torture. Beyond what a human could tolerate. The contractions were torture. I could describe as debilitating lightning strikes. (I now can in contrast say they are nothing like a physiological birth, that I had with my second birth at home) I was the only women in maternity. The only woman!!! There were staff everywhere though no one in sight to help. I was told "you'll be right, this is what birth is" I felt the urge to push when my body wasn't fully ready "dilated" the midwives yelled at me for pushing and told me I couldn't go with my bodies natural urges.

It got to the point where I wanted to die. I was picturing myself with a gun to my head. When the hospital finally "Let" me push, it was 2 hours of torture. I had a room full of people. I was jabbed with morphine for pain relief close the the pushing stage (contributed to my son coming out limp and lifeless)

Without my consent the doctor put an electrode on my babies skull. I found out afterbirth and saw his injury. Without my consent the obstetrician told me I needed a vacuum on my

sons head to get him out. Dr _____ yelled at me to “KEEP MY LEGS OPEN” because I kept involuntarily closing them.

My baby was born, and he was put on my chest for a couple of seconds then taken off me to go on the resuscitation table (the cord was cut without my consent) I was given synthetic oxytocin in my leg to remove placenta without my consent.

Everything happened so fast after birth.

My son was laying on the table with no muscle tone and low oxygen. They took him to special care.

Dr _____ the obstetrician saw my bladder was so full immediately post birth and had to drain with a catheter. Resulting in over 1 Litres retained. (This was why my son couldn't come down the birth canal) not once was I encouraged to go to the toilet during labour.

Everyone left me alone in my room while they attended my son. I was sitting in my own blood and guts for 6 hours. I was finally helped up to have a shower when I realised I couldn't walk. We came to realise I suffered a bladder injury and had bladder retention. I was unable to urinate on my own for 5 days.

For 3 weeks after birth I could barely walk after the intense, violent birth I experienced. That the hospital staff did to me.

Post birth, until this day (4 years later) I suffer bladder retention. I've had to go to hospital 3 times resulting in needing a catheter with over 1.2 Litres stuck. I soon was instructed how to self catheterise for future.

How is this okay??? Due to the neglect care and based off no evidence only hospital policy?

My pelvic floor was damaged due to the vacuum, I have been told part of my pelvic muscle is ripped off the bone.

It is absolutely disgusting how the government lets hospitals get away with the terrible maternity care. And we are told as women it's “normal”. It is far from normal.

I have never felt so unsafe, violated in my life.

After this birth myself and partner were certain we wouldn't have another baby.

Though I started doing research and realised how backwards and non evidence based the hospital system is. Completely over medicalised and women are abused and robbed from the best day of their lives.

I soon realised there is a better way. A safe way. An evidenced based way to birth. And that was at home.

I hired a private midwife to have my second child and planned a homebirth.

The care was phenomenal. It was women centred. Every conversation and topic was informed and left to my decision. I was given evidence and research on everything I wanted and ultimately was able to make whatever decision I wanted for me and baby without question.

My appointments went for 1.5-2 hours long each time and happened from my own home. The continuity of care was unmatched. I felt so cared for, so safe and healthy.

My birth began in the same way as my first (evident it was the way my body physiologically needed) my waters broke and I mentioned to my midwife and she just said “congratulations you’ll meet baby soon. Monitor temperature and waters colour” she came and visited me 12 hours later to check vitals, all looking well. I opted for a vaginal swap to make sure of no infection (this was a completely informed decision and I wasn’t planning to do anything with the result, only for Us to know)

My labour was absolutely beautiful, un disturbed, just me and my husband. I was able let my midwife know when I was ready for her to come over.

I had a completely unmedicalised, PHYSIOLOGICAL EXPERIENCE, my body and baby were working together and everything was so manageable. The “pain” was so mild I didn’t know I was close to meeting my baby.

My midwives came 30 mins before my son was born, because I literally was fine. Like I said, I trusted my baby and body and nothing was intense.

My baby was born in a couple of pushed into a birth pool, and calmly entered the world. It honestly felt like any other day.

The midwives stood back and just observed. They didn’t need to speak or touch me. They are so skilled they can observe if baby or myself are okay.

I birthed my placenta 10 mins later with NO intervention or synthetic oxytocin.

It was so smooth, so pleasurable and wonderful.

The care I was given was incredible. Midwives who aren’t products of the system literally understand birth and give women and babies the chance to birth in the most natural undisturbed physiological way.

Birth is not a medical event, it is safe for 95% of women. So why are we treated as if the hospital is saving us?

Australia is so backwards.

PLEASE READ solutions

- Provide continuity of care for ALL women - with a midwife.
- Remove hospital policies that are not women centred and only favour the hospital and there production line like system
- Only allow an obstetrician to manage a birth IF there is a medical emergency that is outside the midwives scope of practice. That being said the MIDWIFE needs to have complete autonomy of care with the women and not watched over by doctors.
- Women need to understand birth and not be saved by pain relief. Unless they understand the risks and benefits and understand how physiological birth works
- Educate women on physiological birth
- If we can continuity of care, midwifery led and women centred care - women would opt for physiological birth because the environment is set up to do so
- All hospitals should have a homebirth option, because again, birth is safe. And this will help the system have room for more women.

Change university to make studying Midwifery more accessible to people wanting to pursue the career. We are so understaffed yet do not fund or put money into the course to make it more achievable and welcoming for more people.

I want to study midwifery to make a change to the system, yet, Uni only allow something like 50-70 students per year and only able to study full time which obviously is near impossible with young children.

MAKE THIS CHANGE! HELP WOMEN!!!

We should not be left so traumatised after birth and it being blown over as it's "normal"

Women are speechless when I tell them my homebirth was amazing, not painful and euphoric. They can't believe it because it barely exists in the hospital system.