

Submission
No 767

INQUIRY INTO BIRTH TRAUMA

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Partially
Confidential

I gave birth to my son in 2021 and am currently pregnant with my second. The trauma experienced in my first birth and lack of accountability has left me struggling to process my first birth and therefore unable to get in a positive headspace for my second.

After choosing to birth at _____ due to their values aligning with the type of birth I was hoping for, we were left shocked by the rudeness of the on call midwife who made it very clear she did not want to be there. After birthing my son she was tugging on my placenta cord to try and speed up the process. I had not received the injection and this was well within the recommended 60 minute time frame to wait. It seemed like she was just keen to get home.

I was then transferred to the _____ hospital for stitches by ambulance which took 3 hours to arrive so I was nice and swollen by the time we arrived.

My midwife didn't even look at me or talk to me in the ambulance instead choosing to sit on her phone. It was the middle of the night and my first time being separated from my son and was understandably an emotional time.

Once at the _____ an obstetrician assessed me and (much to all the midwives surprise) decided to do my 3rd degree tear stitches there in the room rather than the theatre which is where apparently all the 3rd degree tears are done. We later found out it was right before she was due to clock off for the night. She was rude and very dismissive of the midwives concern which, as you can imagine, didn't create the nicest environment.

After this my partner went home to finally get some rest. Next thing I remember I was being shaken by Drs and struggling to fully wake up. They were yelling at me for my partners number which I didn't know off the top of my head and telling me I was going to theatre. Not sure why they didn't have my next of kins number to hand as if given during previous appointments.

I found out later from my postnatal midwife from _____ that they had forgotten to check me on their rounds and I'd bled out nearly 3 litres of blood. I had retained placenta which was later suggested from the other midwife who was present at my birth that it could be because my main midwife had been aggressively pulling my placenta cord too soon after birth and therefore caused the tear.

I was also informed that had the obstetrician just taken me to theatre this would have been picked up on and prevented.

I was in recovery the whole next day and therefore separated from my son which was the hardest part. We then struggled with breastfeeding and I was angry I missed so many crucial first hours of skin to skin and trying to feed. During this time I was almost ordered to "just give him formula" even though I have expressed some colostrum before birth which was in the hospital fridge.

The shifts changed and a new midwife would come in and tell me totally conflicting information to the previous and next one. It was only when a lactation consultant came in I felt really heard.

My birth ended up being like a soap opera with the 2 hospitals blaming each other and midwives blaming each other and the obstetrician. The manager of the department came in to interview me and showed little remorse. She did however tell me she would be raising with both hospitals the importance of not pulling on the cord within the first 60 minutes and she would report back to me once she had those meetings and done some investigating. It's been 2.5 years and I'm still waiting for the call.

I've woken up many time sweating and having nightmares about being forgotten off the rounds again and just bleeding to death. We aren't in a position to go private. It's not a nice feeling having to birth in the same place where there was multiple failings for my first birth but I don't have much choice.