

Submission
No 779

INQUIRY INTO BIRTH TRAUMA

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Partially
Confidential

I was 32 when I got pregnant with my first baby in 2022 and had a very healthy and normal pregnancy. Throughout my pregnancy I educated myself on inductions and was determined to avoid this type of intervention. I was lucky to get into the MGP at hospital and was extremely grateful and satisfied with the care I received from the midwives through my pregnancy. I dreamed about having my birth in the birth center.

At my 40-week appointment, I was told my fundal height hadn't increased in two weeks. My appointment was in the morning at 9am, and I was then told I needed to go over to the day stay department of hospital and wait for an ultrasound. After a few hours, I had an ultrasound and they confirmed that there hadn't been much growth in the past two weeks. They sent me back to the day stay where I waited until I could meet with one of the doctors. She told me that it was concerning that my baby hadn't grown much in the last two weeks, and they recommended that I be booked in for an induction to get her out as soon as possible as she might be in distress as they suspected the placenta was no longer functioning properly. My heart sank and I started to cry immediately. It was Wednesday and they wanted me to book in for the Friday.

I was then hooked up to the heart rate monitor so they could monitor my baby. I spent hours here crying about having to be induced. It was such a shock. I had said I didn't want to have it, but they made me feel like I could harm my baby if I didn't agree. Being a first-time mum, I felt like I had no choice but to agree. I just hoped that I would go into labour naturally and be able to give birth before the induction date.

That night, my waters broke. I called my midwife and she said I should come in as they still wanted to induce me then, even though I had gone into labour naturally. I begged for them to give me time to let the labour progress naturally, and the induction was booked for Friday anyway, so why did I still have to be induced? They said they needed to get my baby out as soon as possible for her to arrive safely.

We got to the hospital at 8pm and they said I had until 12pm for the labour to progress. Of course, it didn't as I was in such early stages. So I was hooked up to the drip immediately, no other methods used before this. It hit me right away and I started having intense contractions. It was around 4am and I hadn't slept since the night before, and I asked for an epidural because I kept feeling like I needed to vomit from the drugs and had horrible heartburn, which was worse for me than the contraction pain. I believe that if I had been able to labour naturally, I wouldn't have felt the need for an epidural as much.

I had to wait an hour, and then when the epidural was administered, it worked for a brief period then stopped working on one side. So I had to wait a number of hours again for a different anaesthetist to come and fix it. So I was stuck on the bed, unable to move around to help with the pain I could feel on one side. I was also shaking violently from the epidural, and I had a temperature. They didn't want me to have a blanket so not to increase my temperature.

They pricked my baby's head up to 8 times to check her heart rate in this time.

I don't really remember the next few hours but I got a little bit of rest. During this time there was discussion of an emergency c-section to get her out, which we nearly agreed to to get the whole thing over with and to prevent any more distress to my baby. The midwife I had that morning encouraged me to try and push though, despite what the doctors wanted, I am so grateful for her.

They got me to start pushing and within 20 minutes she was out. She was 3 kilos exactly, not as small as they had thought. and my placenta was big and perfect - it hadn't stopped functioning.

We had a very unhappy baby who didn't sleep for the first 6 months. I truly believe it was due to the trauma that she went through to enter the world, which didn't even turn out to be necessary.

I didn't consider my experience to be birth trauma, but now I have read some of these submissions, I think it is. I feel more empowered for my next birth that I won't be agreeing to be induced so easily. It just feels like the doctors guilt you into saying yes.

I want to say that the care I received from the midwives was amazing, and I can't fault them at all. it is the doctors that I felt my experience was impacted by.