

Submission
No 789

INQUIRY INTO BIRTH TRAUMA

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Partially
Confidential

On the 6/3/2018 I presented to _____ in labour. I was 19 years old, in natural labour that had only just started. I had been taught by the hospital to present to maternity straight away when you go into labour. (there is no reason to do that straight away, I now know)

I had an uneventful, normal pregnancy.

My labour started normal, continued on normal, and laboured over midnight.

Unfortunately for mine and my daughter's sake, unbeknownst to me, the obstetrician at this hospital had time limits.

My labour was only 6 hours from active to birth. I struggled with the pain and was offered gas which made me sick and delirious, instead of helped through the pain naturally, or supported. The midwife I had was a kind woman, however clearly was controlled by the rules of her boss, regardless of what her opinions on matters were.

I had made it to 10cm dilated, and strapped to the bed for heart rate monitor. Everything was normal and there was no need to disturb my birth like that. Unfortunately I had passed the time limit of 2 hours since full dilation regardless of not needing to push. I was not allowed to eat, or drink, even though my body wanted to. After already being fingered by multiple strangers while in the most intense moment of my life, which has no bearing on the outcome of birth, my midwife had to unfortunately call the doctor. To save her job basically. She was so sorry. It was protocol. In came a team of multiple people, no emergency, not just 1 doctor, a whole team. Some hospitals have longer policies, this hospital was quite short. So all these medical staff came running in for no emergency, just because it was protocol. No consent from me, to why all these strangers were here.

The doctor asked my then boyfriend, now husband, for consent to cut me to make the baby come faster. He was coerced by this man to mutilate me for no reason. Doctor knows best! My daughter's head then had a vacuum suck her out of me. Her cord was cut instantly depriving her of 1/3rd of her blood, her cord cells stolen by one of the random strangers in the room without our consent, before being passed to me.

Again there was no medical reason for any of this. Just protocol.

As I was trying to bond with my daughter, meant to be the most magical moment of our lives, I was stabbed with synthetic hormones to release my placenta. Like my body wasn't designed to do. Not even 5 minutes had passed, which is incredible for a placenta to be born that quick regardless.

The doctor shoved his fist inside my vagina, pulled on the cord to remove my placenta. Again, no medical need or reason. Just protocol. I had to pass off my newborn the pain was so unbearable. This was meant to be the golden hour, undisturbed bonding between mother and child. A second midwife then started "massaging" my stomach, a completely unnecessary

intervention yet again, I hadn't lost much blood, no haemorage, just protocol. The pain was worse then labour, all tender and raw.

The doctor then stitched me up, demanded the shift change midwife to insert a catheter and left. All these strangers witnessed my birth, yet none even said congratulations. I was invisible to them, not a person with feelings or emotions.

The 3rd midwife at shift change saw no reason for a catheter but gave me a chance to do a wee before she decided. Only being 30 mins since birth I could not wee, which is normal, on doctors orders she had to insert this catheter. I had no consent again.

She was the first midwife to Remark how wrong this was, and to look into homebirth as an option next time. I was so hungry, but no one would bring me something to eat untill the breakfast wagon came by, which was 3 hrs after my birth. (So haven't eaten for nearly 10 hours now, and starving)

I was kept for 3d Days on the ward untill my child was seen by pediatrician. No medical reasoning, it's just what they do here. They had me under the impression we could not be discharged without it. We kept asking to leave but told we must wait. 3 days it took for a pediatrician to see us. The doctor told me I would not be able to deliver vaginally without tearing/ or future episiotomies.

All of this was extremely traumatic, with no consent, to unnecessary intervention, to saviour complex from this doctor. There was also clearly a toxic work environment from him towards the midwife's, including yelling at them when I was trying to first breastfeed my baby.

No regard to how sacred and intense these moments are to a new mother and child.

This was the leading cause of my post natal anxiety. No one could hold my child, I would have nightmares, it nearly ruined my relationship. For my next two pregnancies, I opted for home birth.

My second birth /first homebirth I decided to get maternity care through but birth on my own terms.

I was still treated like a little girl and felt bullied for some decisions through the hospital. My son was born at home after a 2 hr labour, completely healthy. We presented to hospital for a check up, where all the midwife's where so happy to see a healthy 4.25kg baby born at home, no tearing! This baby was 500grams bigger then my first, and I was able to birth him with no issues, because I was in the comfort of my home and didn't have a nasty man trying to control my natrual urges. I would have had my maternity care also done at home with a private midwife but we could not afford too after loosing everything in NYE bushfires.

For my 3rd birth I again had a homebirth, this time I opted for hiring a private midwife to take care of everything. Mainly for continuity of care, unlike my first 2 where I met a different person each visit, my midwife visited my house each time. This made everything so much more comfortable being in the comfort of my home. I had one visit at 36 weeks by the second midwife (who was a personal friend). This son was also born at home, with the two midwives watching. He was born in under 1.5hrs. 3.8kg and no tearing or any other complications. Placenta released within 10 minutes, as I sat in front of my fire breastfeeding my newborn, while my midwives made me a cup of tea and some fruit. My daughter got to watch, and also my dog. We went to sleep after and midwife visited every day for the week, then down to once a week for 6 weeks. A complete stark difference to my first birth, I was allowed to do what my body naturally wanted to do.

My body will forever be mentally and physically scared from my first birth, for no reason. This was just the way it was done at the hospital. Mutilated and bonding stolen from us.

My other births especially my 3rd is how it should be done, for other low risk pregnancies. If the woman is treated better from the start, this would solve many issues further down the track. It would also save resources for actual emergencies, have a better success rate, and save money on taxpayer funding. A normal psychological birth doesn't cost as much as a butchered savaged birth. As well as the lifelong mental health work, depression and anxiety on new mothers, cascade of interventions etc.

To many women are traumatised due to this. To many baby's have fundamental birth rights stolen for no reason.

Of course emergencies will always happen, and trauma will always be associated with these births unfortunately. So why don't we lower that risk, and remove unnecessary trauma by respecting psychological birth? When a birth is textbook, normal, why not support the woman to have a successful non intervention birth? Why the need to sabotage and cause trauma for all?

Is this the start to parent hood we must send all parents down?