

Submission  
No 792

## INQUIRY INTO BIRTH TRAUMA

**Name:** Name suppressed

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Partially  
Confidential

March 2020 at

public hospital

I was told to drive straight to hospital after reduced Doppler flows were discovered at a routine growth scan at 32 weeks. The sonographer had called ahead of time so I knew this was quite serious. I arrived there and was put in a room being monitored. For the next 2 days I was monitored and everything seemed ok. The senior obstetrician waltzed in my room and told me to follow him to have another ultrasound. He took more scans and decided to tell me “you will be delivering today”. I was confused by this and questioned how that was possible since I was only 32 weeks and not in labour. The obstetrician went on to explain “oh, we will be cutting her out”.

I am a type 1 diabetic however I was very well controlled. They told me that I had to have an insulin/dextrose infusion which I reluctantly accepted as it was said to me in such a way I felt I had no choice. Needless to say I knew that was a huge mistake when the nurses treated me the same as a gestational diabetic and refused to let me take an injection for my last meal before I fasted all night. Due to this my blood glucose levels rapidly increased and the normal pregnancy insulin resistance meant it would not return to normal range for 24 hours. I was so unwell and begging to be given insulin and declined every time. Eventually I reached for my own insulin and the nurse took it from me and hid it at the nurses station. I felt so unwell I didn't think I could go ahead with major abdominal surgery the following morning. I was woken every hour the night before so that they could check my blood glucose after they made it unmanageable so had no sleep overnight the night before. I wasn't aware at this point that induction was an option for me, or for that matter I could decline a c-section.

The following morning my c-section was pushed back by hours twice. I was so hungry, so sick and so exhausted. I was very overwhelmed and frightened. I was not reassured or made aware of my rights once. Eventually I was wheeled down to theatre by this point vomiting violently. I was wheeled in to a freezing cold operating room alone without my support person. They were told to wait in a room 2 doors down due to infection risk which I thought was fair enough until I was asked if students were allowed and immediately declined. I wasn't allowed my only support person, yet was expected to allow several others in risking exposure for the sake of them learning? I wasn't allowed any emotional support and was at this point inconsolable and terrified. The obstetrician pressured me twice more to consent to the students being present, each time I more firmly told him “no”. I was told by the obstetrician that it's “too bad. We all have to learn” and ushered the students in to the operating theatre. I was asked to have another cannula placed which wasn't necessary so I declined. Again, I was relentlessly pressured and told I could die without it and truthfully by that point I wished to die so didn't care. I was asked once more for the cannula and reluctantly responded saying “whatever” because I felt they would never quit.

They placed the cannula and I was sat on the bed in preparation for the spinal. My gown was pulled from my body, exposing me to the students and everyone else in the room (I was of similar age to the students and personally recognised one of them from highschool). I was humiliated, exposed, alone, overwhelmed, and mid panic attack without an ounce of compassion or reassurance shown. My support person could hear me whimpering 2 doors down and was brought to tears himself listening to this whole experience unable to support

me. I was told to lean forward and take deep breaths. I may feel a slight pinch but to sit very still. I did as I was told and the needle of anaesthetic hurt far more than a "pinch". I felt it crunch into my back and jumped forward. They had me sit back on the bed to proceed with the spinal. The first spinal attempt failed. I screamed out of pain and shock. I felt every bit of it and told them no more. At that point I told them I did not consent and needed to see my support person for 5 minutes to calm down. I was told "your baby will die. Sit down and get it done" and so I did. To no surprise, the second spinal also failed. I was screaming for them to get off me and let me off the bed. I was physically restrained by two male medical staff.

I could hear my support person desperately trying to open the operating doors after he heard enough of the fear and panic in my screams. He could not get inside and so they continued with a third attempt as I was screaming for them to stop and to let me go. Another person came in and placed the spinal anaesthetic and I had completely dissociated and was trembling and whimpering quietly. Without my knowledge or consent I was stripped completely naked in front of everyone, my numb and immobile legs spread to the whole operating room, labia spread as everyone (including the several students I had declined multiple times eagerly watching) watched my catheter insertion.

Once that was complete my support person was allowed in. Frantically he came straight to my aid and I completely broke down. I could not speak, I could barely breathe and all the doctor wanted to know was if I could feel the scalpel.

He began cutting in to my body immediately. I could feel my abdominal tissue peel open. I laid still, barely breathing in silence praying for this to end. I listened to them discuss what they planned to cook for dinner and what they planned for the weekend ahead. All while I was planning my suicide mentally at the same time I gave birth to my daughter. I remember smelling my blood and burning flesh. I then saw them walk away with my baby with out even telling me she had been born. I asked if she was ok and no one answered me. I asked again about a minute later and was told "yes she's fine" midway through them running countless tests on her tiny 1.8kg body as she began screaming without asking me if I would like that done. She was dressed by a student, her father and I never consented to that, her father wanted to do that himself. I asked to see her and so her father took a very distanced photo of her because no one moved over to allow him to photograph her.

I was trying to zoom in on his phone to see the first glimpse of my baby as a midwife squashed her face in to mine, told me to kiss her, and took her out of the operating room to the special care unit where they vaccinated her tiny body without my consent. Her father was present and was never asked if that was ok. At this point I don't know what condition my baby was in or if she was even still alive 10 minutes later and spent my time in the operating room listening to the doctors make inappropriate jokes amongst themselves as I felt the pressure of the needle pop through my abdomen as they sutured me closed. I was then sent off to a recovery room by myself begging the nurses to get my phone so that I could see if my baby was ok. They took about 30 minutes to retrieve my phone for me as I sobbed the entire time listening to them talking in foreign languages, walking in my room leaving the curtain open, ripping the blanket off me, spreading my legs and scooping out blood from my vagina without even introducing themselves or being asked if I was ok.

By that time I was ready to leave the recovery room. I demanded to be taken straight to my baby which surprisingly they obliged. I remember looking at my daughter and feeling nothing. I just began crying and feeling relieved that she was in fact ok after all of the dead baby threats. I felt so weak and ill that I requested to be taken to my room so that I could try to rest and lower my own blood glucose level since they couldn't after they refused to listen to me 12 hours prior.

As my spinal wore off and I began to feel my legs again I felt the most crippling pain in my neck and shoulders. It didn't subside and only got worse. I was crying for the nurse to give me something for the pain. I was offered a warm wet towel... that was it. A towel wet with warm water. I demanded some pain relief and was offered nurofen because the nurse said I had already had Panadol. I said nurofen wouldn't help and I hadn't taken any Panadol. The nurse went on to explain I had a panadol suppository in in theatre. When I asked her what a suppository was she explained it's essentially a Panadol tablet inserted up your anus. I NEVER consented to that.

I come to find out they allowed a student to place his finger up my anus without my knowledge or consent. If I am not mistaken that is sexual assault. Why would a Panadol suppository help manage the pain when I already had a spinal anaesthetic? It was completely unnecessary. I asked another nurse for additional pain relief and she offered me endone. Previously endone has made me nauseas and vomit which I did not want with my abdomen freshly stitched closed and explained that to her. She immediately treated me like I was an addict seeking drugs without directly saying that. I suffered with no pain relief because nothing they offered was adequate.

That afternoon I was forced out of bed by a nurse who insisted this would help with recovery. I was in too much pain to be walking but listened and did it anyway. I requested to be discharged after all of this treatment and felt I was safer at home. They discharged me without the blood thinning medication, antibiotics and referalls that I was supposed to have but didn't realise at the time. As a type 1 diabetic that was very risky to do as we are prone to infection and slow healing.

I requested my surgical notes months later.

It took about a year for them to finally hand them over to me reluctantly.

It was there I read that a student did place a suppository, it states I had one and it certainly wasn't the midwife cleaning operating instruments or the obstetricians who were both stitching me closed as I watched the whole time.

I reached out to my GP 6 months after birth requesting a mental health plan. I knew something was wrong when I was unable to bond with my baby and wanted to commit suicide. She asked me if I was suicidal and I admitted that I was. She told me she would get a referral and to come collect it the following day. She sent me home, actively suicidal.

The hospital offered a “debrief” when I asked how to make a report. All debriefs are is gaslighting patients in to believing what was done to them was necessary so I declined. I could not afford a lawyer and the free ones kindly told me to not bother as it’s not often people win against public hospitals as you can’t necessarily prove your claims really happened. Nurses don’t go against doctors and doctors don’t go against each other and so I accepted I could do nothing.

If I have another child I will be having a homebirth. I have never trusted the hospital or birthing system since.