

Submission
No 802

INQUIRY INTO BIRTH TRAUMA

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Partially
Confidential

Hi,

I am going to try and articulate the trauma of my first birth at Hospital and the permanent injury I now live with every day.

At around 5am on the 27th of March 2016 I started getting contractions. We stayed around home going for walks baking brownies until around 7pm.

When we arrived the midwives were great. Set me up in a lovely room with mood lighting. We tried doing all the things we had learnt in hypnobirthing but the pain in my lower back was intense. The midwives did numerous examinations but none could tell which way the baby was facing. We tried a bath then got moved to a room with a double bed so we could rest (I'm not sure if the timeline) I was given some pain killers so I could sleep. They then broke my waters which only seem to intensify the pain. The only relief I had was when I was in the shower with the hot spray on my back. Multiple times we asked for an epidural as I was not dilating. I was refused a couple of times and told you can do this, your plan is to both naturally. I was exhausted and in tears saying I give up I can't do this. My husband had to go and demand that they give me a fucking epidural. Finally someone came and gave me an epidural. I could feel a bit but the pack pain was so much better. Within an hour I was fully dilated. Also finally a consultant examined me and determined that bub was posterior, he was able to turn bub. Things started moving quickly then. I felt then need to push so the midwife went to turn down the epidural but it was a new machine so she could work it and turned it off. I went from a bit of pain to a 1000% more pain. They had to get someone to then come and give me an epidural straight in my back. Then I couldn't feel anything. I had no idea when to push.

The registra then said we needed to use forceps, there was no consultation I was not advised there were severe risks. They pulled out my baby girl who was 4.92kg with a massive head at 7pm on the 28th of March 2016. No one had any idea bub was that big. She was 10days over and I didn't have gestational diabetes although every practitioner who enters my room asked that or assumed. It was rude and I had to say no to that question more times than I can remember. I am 6ft tall and latter found out have a retroverted and large uterus. Great for growing big babies. I was told by a specialist if I had gone privately I would have had a later scan as at 6ft tall and measuring a couple of cm over average they would want to check if there was a big bub in there.

I also had to have an episiotomy. I was extremely uncomfortable after birth I asked multiple times at hospital (I stayed in for 4 nights) if everything was fine down there. The midwives got me to lay on my side and said it was fine. I went home.

Had a few breastfeeding issues but the worst was I could sit down without being in a lot of pain. It was horrible. Finally about 10days post birth a midwife came to the house and said o shouldn't be in that much pain still and sent me to hospital. I went to the maternity ward where they got me to spread my legs and instantly saw I had a tear at my perineum which no one saw. It was now very infected and collapsing. They gave me antibiotics told me it will have to heal on its own and to come back in a week. When I called up to go back in the midwife told me I would have to go through emergency. I told her they had asked me to come in. She

said I'd still have to go through emergency. I didn't. I didn't want to wait in emergency with a new born

I was angry scared and in pain. I am crying writing this now 7 and half years later. I went to my GP who treated me for a while but then referred me to a obs/gyne as she could understand what was happening at my perineum. The obs/gyne was unsure about what was happening too and was horrified by my experience. She also did an intern exam and realised I had damage internally. She then referred me to prof who did a range of exams and discovered I had a nearly complete bilateral avulsion of my levators. I have 10% left on my left side. He validated my experience and said what I had been going through wasn't normal and wasn't in my head. I cried with relief. The public system dismissed my experience and underplayed the damage.

I went on to have another baby which maybe I shouldn't have as it made my symptoms worse.

I have tried pessaries and done so much physiotherapy and massages. I have spent \$1000s and \$1000s managing my pain. Some days are better than others physically and mentally. I was a very active person before having babies and I'm now not. Exercise often causes pain that can last for days.

I feel completely let down by the public birthing system. I have a permanent disability which cost me a lot of money. And mentally I am a different person. I was a happy easy going person and now I am not. I believe forceps should no longer be used on women and if they are used informed consent should be given. I really think I should have had a C section.

I hope the system improves.