

**Submission  
No 804**

## **INQUIRY INTO BIRTH TRAUMA**

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**Date Received:** 7 August 2023

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Hi -

My name is Michelle - I'm 42 and have given birth 6 times - each birth has had its own complications and birth trauma

My first baby was when I was 18 - I knew very little and had a normal vaginal delivery - I pushed for 4 hours and was strapped to the bed for the whole time in stirrups . I was not encouraged to mobilise and the sides of the bed were pulled up so I could get off the bed . I was left in stirrups for 3 and a half hours after he was born - waiting to be sutured . I sustained a 4th degree tear and was not given regular pain relief. After I had my stitches . I spent months in pain and was not offered and support or education on why I was in pain for months .

My 2nd baby was 2 years later - I had an abruption and was raced off to theatres to have an emergency section . I lost 4 litres of blood and my baby was lucky to be alive . She was born at 34 weeks . I developed post natal depression and struggled to recover from such a huge blood loss .

My third baby was born via c section . I never established in labour and she was born with her hand beside her head and therefore she never fully engaged in the pelvis . I developed a massive infection at 2 weeks postnatally in my endometrial lining . I was readmitted and spent a week in hospital . I was initially was sent home 24 hours after my section .

My fourth baby was born after an abruption at 29 weeks . I had an emergency c section despite my desire to attempt a vba2c . I developed significant postnatal depression and was readmitted due to a secondary PPH . We spent 93 days in nicu .

My fifth baby was born at 28 weeks due to a uterine rupture . She spent 100 days in nicu . I developed multiple PEs and a collapsed lung . It took months to recover both physically and emotionally.

My sixth and final baby was born at 26 weeks and weighed 1kg . I ruptured my uterus and had an abruption . I woke up with severe pain internally and it took days for the hospital to manage the pain . I had nerve damage , a tear in my rectus muscle and had severe pain radiating from my pupendal nerve . So I have nerve pain in my vagina , and down my left side radiating from my left side of my section scar .

I am now 4 years later - I had chronic debilitating nerve pain internally and down my whole left side from the left side of my section scar . I take multiple pain medications and it affects every aspect of my life . My ability to work , my sex life , my ability to lift and care for my children . The pain medication doesn't take much of the pain away and I have dodgy thousands of dollars sending drs , having surgery, having procedures but none of it has improved my quality of life .

I have now had a subtotal hysterectomy .

My pain is so bad that I feel depressed and I have any hope that life will be any better . It impacts my relationships with my husband and family .

I have had very little education or information on how I might have any improvement in my pain .

The GPs are unhelpful due to limit time and knowledge, my gynaecologists has attempted to help and the management of long term pain is well out of the scope of the midwives and nurses ..

there are no real resources available for people in my position . I have read extensively and am a well educated individual .

I myself am a midwife and nurse .

I get judged by chemists when I collect my medications and although I have found the use of medicinal cannabis very helpful , I am unable to drive whilst taking this medicine and am unable to afford this medication long term . I need my license to work and look after my family and attend appointments and I need to work to pay for my regular PBS medication.

I have found some relief from physio and acupuncture but long term , I can not keep affording these services and have found only minimal services that have adequate knowledge to treat such specific symptoms of long term effects of birth trauma

I find my chronic pelvic nerve pain to be very stigmatising and therefore don't feel I can freely talk about my experience . When I do discuss the pain with my GP or friends and family, they have very little understanding of how much it impacts my life.

My pelvic pain impacts my bladder and bowel function .

Overall I feel very let down by the health system and do not feel it is able to provide care for women with long term effects of birth trauma and pain .

I hope my submission gives some insight into my experience of birth trauma.