

Submission
No 896

INQUIRY INTO BIRTH TRAUMA

Name: Name suppressed

Date Received: 15 August 2023

Partially
Confidential

Dear Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to discuss the experience I had during my two births.

May 2017 – Hospital

I had my first son at Hospital in May 2017. I had a very long induced labour, vacuum didn't work, and baby arrived with the use of forceps after 19 hours.

Being a first-time mother, I was very adamant to follow what was taught to us during the antenatal classes. Just kept giving my breasts to my son, after 3 days of continuous crying, he ended up having blood in his urine. It was not until then, that the nurse who saw the blood suggested that we give him some formula as my milk probably hadn't come in at that stage. I wish someone had told us that it was fine to give formula to your baby if your milk hasn't come in. My son ended up getting jaundice just before we left the hospital, and when we got home, I was concerned for him and called the maternity ward back. The first thing the nurse asked me was, "Are you a first-time mum?" If that has anything to do with why a mum is concerned about her baby. Made me cringe at the thought of asking for any help from the maternity ward after that.

January 2022 – Hospital

I started bleeding profusely at home at 39 weeks pregnancy and rushed to Hospital with my husband. This was in January 2022, Omicron was causing a lot of additional protocols in the hospitals.

When we arrived at the hospital my husband rushed in to speak to a nurse and explain the circumstances, she came to see, was shocked at all the blood running down my legs and directed us to get to the maternity ward.

The staff at the maternity ward were not at all mindful of the state I walked in, they didn't take us seriously when we said that I had lost so much blood at home, in the car and the carpark and didn't even take me into a room until I showed the nurse my towel with all the blood I was sitting on in the car.

When I got into the room, she didn't allow me to take a sit but just kept me standing whilst all of them were running around, getting hold of my OB, and my records etc.

A senior staff member came in after a few minutes, and started shouting at the other staff and said "Why haven't you got the patient to sit down on the bed". They then got me to sit down on the bed and started attending to me.

I was and remain appalled at the way the staff in the maternity ward handled me and my circumstances. Placental abruption is such a serious condition and to not take us seriously when we said what had happened... We are thankful, our OB, did get there fairly quickly and got both my daughter out perfectly.

I hope more training is provided to nurses at maternity wards to deal with mothers and the different circumstances that present to them. The trauma that a mother experiences from birth can be significantly reduced, if more mindful actions and words are spoken by the first point of contact in the hospitals.

Yours faithfully