

Submission  
No 920

## INQUIRY INTO BIRTH TRAUMA

**Name:** Name suppressed

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Partially  
Confidential

We tried for a couple of years to fall pregnant and had multiple miscarriages.

This baby was truly longed for & I was so careful throughout the pregnancy.

We put our trust in the hospital & staff.

The pregnancy went relatively smoothly, other than a bleed at 9 weeks.

Toward the end of the pregnancy I had severe fluid retention - no shoes would fit me, my legs & feet were totally blown up & painful & I was vomiting in the evenings. I was breathless. I was under a MGP program & the midwife said it was heartburn & dismissed the puffy feet. They were doing the testing for proteins in the urine. I remember the result coming back concerning on occasions & it was shrugged off as contaminated. The midwife later told me she suspected preeclampsia was brewing, but this was never communicated with me. At 39 weeks my water broke in the early morning. Contractions didn't start.

We went to the hospital. My blood pressure & observations were taken once on arrival and not again until post birth at 5pm, 8 hours later.

By late afternoon the staff were encouraging induction as we are rural & Doctors were apparently going home for the night. I wanted a caesarean but was talked out of it. They hooked up the induction (standard mix for a new mother despite the fact that I have had 2 children previously & having had fast labours of 3 hours for both). The contractions were too close together & impacted on oxygen reaching my unborn daughter. I did not feel safe and was in an immense amount of pain. (Please note both of my first children were natural drug free births). I said to the midwife that something was wrong & no observations were done & the midwife said – “what do you want me to do? Turn off the induction?” My blood pressure wasn't taken. My observations weren't done. Baby was monitored & showed signs of distress & her heart rate dropped & was affected for half an hour. She was born with a low Apgar of 5, blue, high lactate 11.8 / 9.8 cord & admitted to special care (if she had not recovered as rapidly as she did, she would have been on a Heli flight to from our rural hospital). My BP was finally taken post-delivery & it was through the roof 170/90. I don't know how long it was that high, could have been hours. I was told that I could have had a stroke by one of the doctors. I developed severe post-natal preeclampsia, but it was still not diagnosed. I was discharged from the hospital & then readmitted to hospital reading 170/106. I lost 20kg in fluid during birth. I had tinnitus for 2 months post birth; Like a low hum aeroplane in my head at nights. I was dizzy. My bloods - kidney & liver function took 6 months to return to normal. My brain MRI showed a hyperintensity flare in the L cerebellum that has since resolved a year post birth. I still don't feel right or myself. I get pressure headaches - I have a managerial position in Publishing & can't function in my job from basic tasks like being unable to speed type at work anymore without making errors & don't cope with stress / multitasking well at all when I am used to being in a deadline job. I am concerned that I have been cognitively permanently affected by what happened to me, having high BP that was not managed during labour.

If My BP was taken, I could have been on BP meds that protected me. I therefore feel deeply upset that much of what I have suffered through was avoidable. Such high BP over a period of time. The impacts on my daughter & I are incredibly hard to face, and the specialist says maybe this is just my new baseline. I have spent thousands on medical care over the last year and am not coping a year on from the birth due to the birth trauma and impacts on my health and the impact on my family.