

Submission
No 926

INQUIRY INTO BIRTH TRAUMA

Name: Name suppressed

Date Received: 9 August 2023

Partially
Confidential

My name is _____ and I am 30 years of age, I live in the _____ area and have a 2.5 year old.

I went through the old _____ Hospital for my pregnancy and birth, with my birth taking place on 10 March 2021 and felt very let down by the system.

From December 2020 – March 2023 when my daughter was born I presented multiple times for reduced movement and each time was monitored for a small period of time and sent home, told that my child was small and there was issues with the placenta 2 days before Christmas with no further information given, only that additional scans would be required

Fast forward to the week my daughter was born, I remember on the Monday morning going to the bathroom and after finishing my wee, there was still liquid gushing out, once this had eased I called the Birthing Suite at the hospital and told them what had happened, the response I received was “its your first baby, that’s not how it happens, you just did a big wee”

Feeling ignored but not having any other option I carried on with my day, I had a midwife appointment that afternoon and thought I would discuss it again during my appointment. When attending my appointment, I advised the midwife of the loss of fluid that occurred that morning, and once again felt dismissed.

I went home feeling like a first time mother who had no idea and no support from the local hospital or health care system, after being assured during our birth and parenting classes (at the same hospital) that the midwives are there to support us, and to always call no matter the situation.

The next day (Tuesday) I had been having back pain from the early hours of the morning and continuing on all day however after the lack of support from the hospital the day before I chose to try and not think about it and get on with my day, however by that night I was no longer able to deal with the pain and attended the hospital birthing unit. We sat outside the unit for almost 2 hours before I was seen. Once we had finally been taken in, I was monitored, and advised the midwives that I believed my waters had broken the prior morning, once again I feel this was dismissed.

After an hour of monitoring I was advised “this is the start of labour and being your first baby you are in for a long couple of days” given some panadine forte and sent home around 11:30pm, and told to try and get some rest.

On the morning of 10 March 2021, the day my precious girl was born I was woken at 2:30am by some intense back pain, after laying in bed for a while I decided to hop up and try the heat pack to help with the pain, after almost 2 hours and no relief I woke my husband and we decided to call the hospital. I was advised to have a warm shower and see how I go, if anything got worse, I was told to call back.

I proceeded to have a warm shower, which made things worse and called the hospital. I was advised I had better head in to be checked.

We arrived at the hospital around 5:30am and I was seen to and checked around 6am where I was advised I was 4cm dilated, no one asked if my waters had broken however internal exams were completed regularly. By 10am I was fully dilated, and it was time to get prepped to push.

After about an hour of pushing my babies heart rate had started dropping and they had to stop the medication helping the contractions to come. I was advised we would proceed with out the medication, however pushing was not working as by the time the next contraction came any progress during the last push had been lost.

I do remember at this time starting to shiver and being told this was due to the epidural and not to worry.

I then had a room with 3 doctors and some other nursing staff and all of the doctors completed both internal exams and ultrasounds and decided that the best option was heading up to theatre for forceps, or a c section if the forceps did not work. I remember the shivering getting worse, and my husband having to hold my arm still as I was shaking that much, and being told this was due to the spinal block.

However, our beautiful little princess was born, she was here and safely on my chest. The Doctors proceeded to deliver the placenta and carefully stitch me up. During this time, I was asked by the midwife if I had been smoking or drinking during my pregnancy, to which I advised no. This was slightly offensive to myself as I had been asked many times during the pregnancy if I was smoking as the baby was small, I had never been a smoker.

I was then told that my placenta was calcified however nothing further came of this as to why this may have happened or if there was any risk to my baby or any future children.

We were then taken to recovery where it was discovered that I had a fever, so instead of holding my precious girl and getting to watch her measurements be taken I was surrounded by doctors while my baby and husband were in another room. I was then placed on sepsis watch and under constant monitoring. I was asked where I believed the infection had come from and I advised I believed my waters had broken over 48 hours before the birth of my daughter. I was asked why I didn't tell anyone about this and I advised I had on several occasions and been dismissed.

During the birth and time in recovery I was thankful that the midwife had managed to get some images of this time, however these images actually haunt me as I look at them and I see what should have been some of the happiest times overshadowed by the fact I look so out of it, in some images I look so pale that I honestly look dead. These images are not shown, not to anyone, not even my husband and I enjoy looking at them to look back on this time.

I am beyond blessed that our little one arrived safely, however I feel that the pregnancy and birth process was a mostly negative one for myself, while I would love to one day have another child, I think back to the birth of my first child and I am scared, scared that this may happen again, that something may again be missed and the outcomes may not be as happy as they were the first time. As a first time mum I expected to feel supported, heard and safe and I felt quite the opposite. My husband is also

feeling the same way about the birthing process and he too is scared to possibly go through it again one day.