

Submission  
No 1054

## INQUIRY INTO BIRTH TRAUMA

**Name:** Name suppressed

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Partially  
Confidential

My wife and I arrived at \_\_\_\_\_ Hospital at around 1:30am on Saturday November 7th, 2020. My wife laboured for several hours while we waited for our obstetrician. When the shift change for midwives occurred it felt like they thought we had only just arrived even though my wife had been labouring for hours. When the obstetrician finally arrived at 8:30am they informed us that they were booking us in for a C-Section because we were not dilated enough. My wife asked if we could at least try and our obstetrician reluctantly agreed and got my wife into position. The moment we were in position it became clear that my wife was definitely dilated enough and our child was more than ready to come out. This is such a mixture of emotions because having our baby born is such a beautiful and wonderful thing, however it is mixed with so much confusion and anxiety because we had no guidance or advice on what was happening or what we should expect. We had no opportunity to keep the umbilical cord or anything placental.

After the baby was delivered we did skin-to-skin and were so incredibly happy. Our child was healthy and we were over the moon. Then everything started to really go downhill. The nurse came in and said that they were going to take our child for a short while and we should get some rest. Being exhausted we both laid together and had a nap. This is probably the biggest regret of my life. My wife absolutely deserved the rest, however because I also rested it had become the first time I had let down my child. When we awoke and asked for our child we were told that they had gotten cold and needed to be placed in special care. In special care they also found that their blood sugars were dropping as well as their temperature. Other than telling us that our baby's temperature dropped when we did not have them, we were told nothing about what could be causing it and what it could mean. To this day my belief and fear is that because I was not there for them, my child was left exposed and vulnerable causing them to spend the next 9 days (the first 9 days of their life) in the special care unit.

The special care unit had its own range of traumas. Those 9 days were spent with us trying to steal moments with our newborn who had IV's and blood test punctures all over their body. We felt we were only allowed to be with them when they needed a feed and we were quickly ushered out whenever a feed was finished or the midwives were changing shifts. It was a torturous feeling that we were not able to be with our new child and this was made worse by the fact that due to COVID regulations we had no one with us who had experienced this before.

We felt we had no control over anything and that we had failed our child already. They were given two X-Rays without our consent or knowing, we found out about and were there for the ultrasound but the technician just spent the entire procedure talking to the nurse while he scanned; and the midwife threw out our child's umbilical cord without us knowing.

During those 9 days my wife and I were engaged in other issues. Our obstetrician did not contact us at all after the birth even when my wife requested a consult due to having severe pain. My wife was very clear in describing that she felt like there was excruciating pain in her pelvis that prevented her from moving. The nurses and on-call doctors reviewed her stitches and said that everything was normal. After the fourth day of intensifying pain my wife passed a massive blood clot with loose stitches embedded inside it. The pain immediately went away. We

kept the clot in a ziplock and when we brought it up with the nursing staff they said that passing such a thing was normal and tried to dispose of the clot.

After 9 days of confusion, fear over our child's health, our child being force fed antibiotics and feeling like we were complete failures; we were finally told that our child was fine to leave and it was likely just a false alarm. The entire ordeal had been completely unnecessary.

As a result of this both my wife and I have had crippling anxiety over ensuring we advocate properly for our child. We also have severe guilt over the fact that we feel we failed our child in their first days of life. This anxiety will never go away, this guilt will never fade. Every time I look at my child's face I am reminded that I failed them within the first hours of their life. That they were alone, scared and confused and all I did was sleep. My wife and I still suffer severely from anxiety and an overprotective parenting style to the point where we barely allow even family members to visit.