

Submission
No 1056

INQUIRY INTO BIRTH TRAUMA

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Partially
Confidential

Hospital, NSW

was born 1st February 2022 at 7:19am weighing 4.165kgs. My pregnancy with was a good pregnancy once i overcame morning sickness from 12 weeks. I had an ultrasound at 34 weeks because my son was born at 34 weeks unexpectedly on 27th September 2020 and we still dont know to this day why he decided to enter the world so early. I would also like to note that he was a good size given he was 34 weeks early weighing 3.235kgs. I had an episiotomy with as he wasnt coming out and they use forceps to get him out. He did have to stay in hospital for 3 weeks until he was able to come home. At my 34 week ultrasound with pregnancy, we found that my cervix was shortening and I had 2 steroid injections in the case that i delivered early. I also started a course of progesteron. At my midwife appointments i had at the hospital there was never ever a discussion that might be a big baby or that i would have trouble giving birth. We also never had a discussion whether or not i may need a caesarean. I had an appointment cancelled with the hospital 1 week before i had (I believe due to staff shortages/Covid). Given that was a big baby at birth we would have thought there may have been a discussion around whether i be offered a caesarean or be prepared to not go full term.

was born 39 weeks 2 days. The day i gave birth to i woke up about 3:30am and started having contractions. They were about 3 minute apart so i rang the hospital and they advised me to come in. I had a quick shower and we were on our way. We arrived at the hospital at 5am and i was checked and was 6cm dialated. They then took us to the birthing suite (without giving us a Covid test before). I continued to have contractions and i felt like i needed to push so i was standing on the edge of the bed pushing. I then got onto the bed and on all 4's and continued pushing. I felt her head so knew she wasnt far off. I kept pushing but wasnt really having contractions. The midwife suggested an episiotomy because still hadnt come. I had an episiotomy with so wasnt worried about that. I laid on my back while she performed one. still wasnt coming so the next thing i knew i had all the midwives and Dr running into the delivery suite. Dr slipped and fell from water from the sink that was at the front door and bumped his head on the sink and hurt his knee. In that moment the attention was taken away from me and onto Dr I would also like to note that Dr had a couple days off work due to this injury he sustained while slipping on the water spilt from the sink that is at the front door in the birthing suite. They performed a second emergency episiotomy making the original one bigger as right shoulder was stuck. There was a midwife sitting on top of my chest pushing down hard and Dr was pulling her out. Dr yelled at the midwife as she was performing the manouver wrong. was pulled out and placed on my chest and then taken for oxygen. was shoulder dystocia and as a result now has a birth injury to her right arm, hand and shoulder called bracial plexus palsy. She was pulled with such force she has nerve damage that we dont know will ever repair itself. This was evident as soon as we saw her. was breathing okay and was off with the dr and widwives to get looked over. We were in the delivery room for a couple of hours waiting to be taken to a room. The midwife advised we would need to have a Covid test before we were allowed to leave the room as they hadnt give us one when we arrived. They performed the test and came back to advise that i was positive while Cody my partner was negative. We honestly thought at first that they were

joking i was positive as i had no symptoms and had not left the house as i was heavily pregnant. I begged them to do a second test however was automatically rejected. This positive test changed everything, everyone who entered had to wear PPE gear and only entered if necessary. This meant that they made the assumption that [redacted] was positive and did not go into the special care unit like she should have. We were taken to a room and had a midwife stay with us overnight in the room in case we needed help. [redacted] was not able to be seen from the paediatrician physiotherapist as they made the assumption she was covid positive. We stayed in hospital for 2 nights and the day we left we went and had covid tests at our local centre performing them and both came back with negative results.

We had a debrief meeting with the head Dr, Dr [redacted] at the hospital to go over [redacted] birth and he advised that she was lucky to be alive as 3 more minutes and she wouldn't be with us today. The Dr made an assumption that Dr [redacted] falling over and hurting his knee did not impact the birth of [redacted] i mean how is he to make that call when he was not present in the room? This meeting was a few weeks after [redacted] birth and was triggering to say the least. To hear your daughter was almost not with us is something no mother or father should hear had i received the care i should have received. I thought this meeting may have bought me some peace but it did quite the opposite. I pushed and pushed for more answers with [redacted] birth being put to the board for a review. Even though we were not able to read the meeting minutes i am so happy this meeting was held.

[redacted] is now 18 months old and still cannot lift her arm above her head or use her shoulder. Her arm is always in a midline position, she never reaches out or up. She has had one surgery at 13 months to perform a nerve transplant however when they were in the surgery they received a small response from the nerve so they decided not to proceed. [redacted] sees an occupational therapist once a week and physiotherapy once a fortnight.

I love [redacted] so much however i feel like i was robbed completely of the whole newborn phase with endless appointments including Physiotherapy once a week at the same hospital i gave birth to at. My son had to be looked after and still to this day is so i can take [redacted] to all these appointments. The constant juggle of trying to just be a mum whilst take your child to all these appointments that we shouldn't have to be going to is just so hard. We also have to travel to [redacted] Hospital every couple of months to see [redacted] specialist, Dr [redacted] hospital is so triggering for me and i am so happy [redacted] was able to receive funding from NDIS this year which means we are able to go to appointments closer to home. One of the best things i did early on after [redacted] birth was speak to a birth trauma psychologist, this has helped me immensely.

[redacted] has to do multiple stretches everyday and we do mit therapy on her left hand to try and make her right arm work harder. We are hopeful that one day she may be able to reach out and also use her shoulder.

As i write this with tears rolling down my face, I wholeheartedly feel completely let down by [redacted] hospital. I still think about her birth daily and how different things would be if i had received the care i should have received. I absolutely love being pregnant however the fear i now have for childbirth now is overwhelming to say the least. The isolation i have felt, the constant grief, the feeling of guilt is a daily

reminder to the trauma of my birth with