

Submission
No 974

INQUIRY INTO BIRTH TRAUMA

Name: Name suppressed

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Partially
Confidential

Birth Trauma Submission
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My name is _____, I live in _____, I'm 38 years old and I have three children 7, 5 and a half and 2 and a half.

I had all three births in _____ c hospital, the first being in July 2016 in the MGP, my second in 2017 in the public hospital system and my third in 2021 by c-section shared care between my GP and _____ hospital.

I experienced birth trauma in multiple instances with all three births. Birth #1 left me with an uneven naturally made and uncontrolled 3C tear, possibly even a 4 in one part now that I have been checked internally through scans and prolapse.

Being a new mother and being from a health and fitness background I had no idea about an overactive pelvic floor, or how genetics played a role in uterus and pelvic muscle tone and tightness.

From what I had gathered, keeping active was a help to my pregnancy and after birth. Little did I know that this increased the chances of a posterior positioning child and excessive tearing during a vaginal birth.

After 11 or so hours in hospital of close to 2-3 min apart contractions and 9 hours prior of 5-6 mins apart at home moving toward the end of labor to pushing was exhausting and an epidural was requested.

I presented at the hospital at 6cm and had the epidural 10 hours later at 8cm, with no intervention other than gas and keeping as forward facing and as active as possible. Hindsight is a wonderful thing and I now see that getting the baby into position was more important than anything in order for labor to progress well. I wish I had been properly prepared with ways to manually help to get the baby into position before and during labor. Knew nothing about this at the time.

I wish I had also known that tearing so badly was going to bring on issues with prolapse, I would have requested more intervention to be honest.

During pushing I was very strong and was told to push down with everything I had... so I did and out shot my son shoulders and all. Tearing me to shreds. When the obstetrician was called I was hemorrhaging and was told there was no time to get me to theater, this had to be stitched right here. I remember exact words clear as day.

My name is Dr.... I have been working a 16 hour shift, but don't worry I am good at what I do. It looks like a whipper snipper has gone off in your vagina I can't see where this flap

goes but I will figure it out... I need light" Dr turned to the midwife "Why wasn't I called before? Why wasn't this an episiotomy"?

this is a vaginal reconstruction".

Midwife: "There were no signs before..."

Dr " you have lost a lot of blood so we need to work very quickly, keep talking to me"

Nurses as proceeded to talk to me about my baby which was lovely, my husband was ushered out of the room while all this was going on.

After a day the physio therapist told me that I had a 3C tear and that I was at risk of needing a colostomy bag, I was left shocked but that was all I saw of them, no follow up, just a print out of pelvic floor exercises which lucky for my genetics and background in Exercise Physiology I understood to start working that pelvic floor as soon as I could.

There was a clear as day argument between obstetrician and midwife in this room, theater procedures were also not followed. I found this out when I was preparing for my second birth.

I wanted to be supported by the MGP however being high risk I was denied access to the extra support I really needed. I asked for a C Section and had to escalate this due to no notes of a theater procedure being conducted to reconstruct my vagina post the 1st birth.

I had to hunt down the Dr that treated me and by the luck of god I saw her at one of my prenatal appointments in the hospital. I pleaded that this Dr remembered my traumatic birth and recovery and that I understood the risk of re-tearing over my jagged whipper snipper result. The whipper snipper comment brought the memories all back for the OB and I. My declined C-section for birth plan 2 was revoked with the OB's help. Thank god!

Birth 1, I was also left a mess and needed around the clock care, I could not bend or move well enough to pick up baby from the crib and nurse and My husband was 30 mins late from work and was denied access on day two because he missed the visiting hours time by the 30mins, At that point I told the nurse I couldn't pick my baby up to feed him and so she asked me what I wanted to do, I said that I feel like im recovering from trauma and my body could only focus on that let alone feed him after losing 1200 units of blood. Having my hubby around may have helped to support me to feed.

I'm left with emotions from these experiences, I was interested in pursuing a complaint about how I was looked after and There are no services offered to take things up with someone. The questions all turned into a really difficult case and shut down very quickly. I also was afraid that due to needing to rely on the public system again for birth 2 and subsequent births I have, I didn't want this to be an issue or to put me or other births at risk having complaints on my file.

Thank you for allowing me to share this. And I wish for a service supplied to future local mothers that nurtures and cares for them after hearing and sharing our experiences and learnings.