

Submission
No 1081

INQUIRY INTO BIRTH TRAUMA

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Partially
Confidential

“Unlucky” was how my obstetrician described my first birth to me 7 years ago in Public Hospital. But more than luck could have prevented the trauma I experienced that day that has affected the rest of my life.

It all started with a midwife scraping me internally while checking if my waters broke (which she now couldn't test due to bleeding). So I was sent home. When we returned later to be admitted, there was no room available and I was left unattended in the waiting room with no heat pack to deal with the pain. I phoned my OB for approval to labour in the comfort of my home but when we got there, the hospital called me back stating that in NSW a GBS+ mother needed to be admitted within a certain time frame from when her waters broke. So back to the hospital we went.

After the long, terrible start to my birth my OB advised I get an epidural and get some sleep before delivering in the morning. However, when I woke and began pushing, I endured severe back labour between contractions and it seemed as though my epidural wasn't working. It was at this point that I lost my vision memory of my birth. I pushed for an hour and a half until my OB decided baby was in the wrong position and was stuck. So we prepped for surgery. My OB wanted to try one last attempt to pull baby out with the vacuum, against the head midwife's advice not to, and this failed causing the loudest POP! in the operating room.

Proceeding to c-section, it was discovered that my epidural fell out of my back and a general anaesthetic was needed. When the mask was put on my face I couldn't breath and panicked. My husband was sent down the hall to a room on his own, where he later watched multiple staff run past thinking the worst, that he lost his baby and wife.

When my son was born, he went limp and blue and was resuscitated then transferred to the NICU with a hematoma and prescribed 5 days of antibiotics.

We struggled through the first year and a half of our son's life. During a root canal treatment in a dentist chair I had a flashback that abruptly halted the operation and it was then that I was diagnosed with PTSD.