

Submission
No 1143

INQUIRY INTO BIRTH TRAUMA

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Partially
Confidential

Rebecca Shaw Birth of daughter

born 3rd October 2019 @ 8.08am

I noticed when I was pregnant with my daughter that there was something wrong and that I had a UTI because I had all the symptoms for a UTI I did mention this at my midwife appointments and was told it is common during pregnancy and to ensure I am drinking water and taking Ural which I was already doing, I requested seeing the Doctor about it at my next appointment and it was just disregarded. I ended up mentioning it to the midwife in one of birthing classes as I was having constant back pain on my left side, vomiting, my belly was very sore to touch, I was constantly uncomfortable, hot & sweaty.

She flagged it with and validated what was happening isn't okay, at my next ultrasound which was either my 32 or 36 week ultrasound I mentioned it to the technician and they just did a check on my kidneys and noticed a growth in my bladder that was abnormal and that my kidneys were "inflamed" I did ask for them to also add it in to their notes back to the doctor and midwife so someone would listen and take it seriously.

I ended up noticing my daughters movements in belly were becoming abnormal and the vomiting plus me being in pain, hot and sweaty so I did present to the hospital of a night a couple of times with the last time me presenting ended with me being admitted where I was put on an IV of fluids and antibiotics plus they monitored the babies heartrate and noticed that she didn't have a resting heartrate and even though I was on fluids I was dehydrated.

Fast forward a few days and I had spoken to the Doctor on Thursday 1st October and requested to be induced because I was becoming concerned for both my own health and the babies and not getting solid answers to the questions I was asking to which they agreed would be a good idea with the babies heartrate being so high and not resting and if they induced me it would prevent my waters breaking and the baby being at risk of infection and it would be a controlled induction which gave me some piece of mind.

I was allowed to go home before my induction day so I could pack and get myself ready.

When I had actually gone into labour at home I wasn't aware and ignored the pains because I had been having severe pains from pelvic griddle pain & my kidney. It wasn't until my waters broke on the Wednesday 2nd October in the morning that I was in labour, phoned the birthing unit ahead to let them know we were coming in because I had anxiety around the information I had been given by the doctor the couple of days before with the infection and my daughter non-resting heartrate.

I presented at the hospital's birthing unit and they didn't believe I was in labour, I explained that my waters had broken and I couldn't tell them how long I had been in labour before my waters broke because of the constant pain I had been experiencing for weeks, they wanted to send me home until the contractions got closer but refused because of the risk my daughter was already at and that I felt more comfortable being monitored with everything that was already going on. I got sent to wait outside the birthing unit next to a busy café with my waters literally leaking down my legs because the towel I had brought was already full, I waited out next to the café with people looking at me and talking in ear distance embarrassed for 30 – 45 minutes until a midwife was walking passed and asked what I was doing and I explained to her what was going on she then brought out a trolley to check my obs and then took me into the consultation room which is where I stayed for the next 14 hours. Luckily my cousins and aunty came to join as they were busy with birthing and I needed help being monitored with the baby as my waters had broken by themselves they needed the contractions to be closer together before they could check my cervix to avoid passing the infection onto the baby (From my understanding of what I was told) I did request gas but was told because I am in the early stages and being asthmatic I wasn't allowed the gas.

After 14hrs I was moved to a birthing suite and was completely exhausted the contractions were getting closer together and when checked I wasn't anywhere near dilated far enough to push the baby out. I couldn't stand or hold myself up, was in pain from the pressure of each contraction as they were so close and becoming very nauseous. After 16hrs I spoke to the midwife and begged for the epidural hoping that would help relax me so I could dilate, they arranged for the anesthetist to come and administer the epidural but this stage my contractions were back to back so I held onto my partner and aunty and cried while it took place because I knew I couldn't move while it was happening the contractions were just riding each other.

After the Epidural kicked in I did start to relax but the baby started to get distressed unless I laid on my left (totally bizarre) which cause for my left side to go numb up to my shoulder and my right side not be affected and still have all the feeling but every time we would try to re-position myself they babies heart rate would go up.

After the 2nd prick test where they scraped the babies scalp to check her and we had gone to the device inside of me to monitor the baby I had said enough no more scraping or hurting my baby this baby needs to come out now, I was crying, in pain, couldn't feel my left side, could see the baby was in distress and I started to feel that something wasn't okay with myself and I was struggling to stay conscious.

By 6am on Thursday 3rd of October my Aunty came to check on me thinking I would have had a baby and she noticed I was coping and still in labour. She phoned her boss who was head of surgery who than contact the head obgyn Dr who than started going through my notes and questioning my doctor why I hadn't of had the baby. Once she saw the state I was in and that my baby was in distress I was rushed to theatre for an emergency C-Section because the baby needed to come out asap.

My partner was being given a run down while I was being prepped for a C-Section than Dr came into theatres noticed there wasn't time a C-Section and started to explain to me what was going to happen as the baby needed to come out now, I started crying and going into shock and screaming out for my partner because I was petrified. My partner now husband came and sat next to me while extra staff came in to assist.

I was given an epistome which I felt on my right side which caused me to blackout, than I woke up to my legs being pulled up towards my chest by two staff members while another two were on my shoulders pushing my down to assist in me pushing the baby out, I blacked out again and came to it with the baby being pulled out via forceps however she wasn't screaming, crying or moving. She was taken immediately to the Snr Pead who had been brought up, I remember the adrenaline pumping through me because I was scared that my baby was taken away and all I could see was a team of staff trying to assist with my baby and I could see everything on a screen that overlooked my baby, I remember screaming at my partner to go and see if she was okay and too look after her. At this point the placenta was out and I was being stitched from the epistome which I could feel being done.

After 45mins they wrapped up my baby and brought her over and we found out we had a little girl who decided to make a dramatic entrance into the world with a high heart rate over 270.

After theatres I was hoping to go into the birthing suite just so my partner and I could have sometime with out new daughter however was taken straight to the woman's ward to a shared room, still covered in blood and my waters, antiseptic from where they had planned to do the c-section and still with the tubing in my spine from the epidural.

I received no assistance with breast feeding which I did struggle with, I was just told I needed to try but I was clearly struggling to do and my baby was hungry, the Snr Pead had instructed that my baby needing to checked every 30mins because of the high rate at birth which wasn't happening unless I

brought to their attention, It wasn't until we had my Aunty and mum come check that they noticed our baby hadn't been weighed, measured, have a name tag on her leg or a card in the crib.

That night at around 8pm before my husband left I was trying to figure out how to feed our daughter and I was trying to get comfortable on the bed when I started having this stinging nerve pain in my back to which we realized I still had the tubing in my spine from the epidural we weren't sure if it was still meant to be there or not so my partner went and got a midwife because they hadn't responded to the buzzer and I was in a lot of pain, the midwife asked why it hadn't been removed and I simply replied that I wasn't aware it needed to be removed, it was removed and disposed of, while I was still sitting my blood and waters. I requested if I could have a clean bed or sheets but they needed to ensure I could stand on my own before I could have clean sheets.

Twice during the day and when my partner came up to visit the next morning I had said to him I needed to go to the bathroom and the my belly was very sore to which he noticed the bed rail kept being closed down over the catheter causing it to be blocked, once he lifted the rail the bag would fill up. After the 3rd time I requested that it be removed or I was pulling it out.

On the 4th of October so, the 2nd day our daughter was weighed, measured, given a card in her crib. I also was told I could have a shower if my partner was happy to assist, which I thought was normal, I still didn't have all my feeling and strength in my right side so, we waited until my partners parents came up to visit and meet their granddaughter to have a shower because I needed help getting out of the bed and taking a shower.

My partner held me up while he helped wash me so I could feel clean and human again, once we were done my partner requested that I have clean sheets and sat me down on the chair after 30mins he went and found a cleaner who showed him where the sheets and bed linen were, he stripped the bed, gave it a clean over made the bed while I tried to feed our daughter.

On that night, my daughter started to cluster feed to bring through my milk supply and my nipples were very sore and tender and starting to crack I was explained it was normal breastfeeding the first time and to persevere with it.

I popped her down after putting her to sleep at around 10pm, woke up approx. an hour later and looked over to check my baby to notice that she was missing. I become frantic thinking someone had stolen my baby, started screaming, crying and shaking, woke up the lady I was sharing a room with, was pressing the buzzer because I couldn't move from fear and my emotions, the lady I shared a room with ended up helping me to the nurses station to where my brain new baby was laying in another crib while they did some paper work. I was told that my baby had stirred and thought so I could rest to take her out of the room. I have never been so distressed in my life thinking someone had stolen my baby.

I rang my partner in tears sobbing and asked if he could come up to the ward to sit with me while I napped as I didn't feel comfortable and wanted him to watch our daughter, my neighbor I was sharing a room with said she didn't mind and was okay but when he came up the midwives sent him back home until visiting hours were open. To which I didn't go back to sleep til visiting hours and my partner was allowed to come in when he did I managed to get a few hours sleep up my sleeve and when I woke up I requested to go home because I didn't feel comfortable, safe and was becoming overwhelmed and my anxiety was putting me on edge.

When we were discharged and got home I noticed our daughters skin was yellowish and her eyes were also yellow. We took her back to the hospital and she had jaundice and was told it was because my milk supply hadn't come through yet and it was still colostrum, they pricked and checked her levels and she sitting on the borderline but didn't require phototherapy, we were told to introduce formula to help flush it out so, we started mix feeding and every couple of days would return to the

hospital to have her bilirubin levels checked, this went on for a couple of weeks to even the midwife coming to our house.

After the ordeal of everything we had gone through I became resistant to leaving the house and would become very anxious when we needed to leave, struggled sleeping because I was petrified I would wake up and she would be gone, didn't receive much assistance with breastfeeding and was constantly anxious about everything.

I tried explaining this to the midwife when we had our checkups but didn't receive the help I needed luckily my partner is very supportive and reached out to family and friends to constantly check in on myself.

Still to this day I am very anxious about our daughter and struggle to sleep if she isn't close by and being pregnant again I think was also amped up the emotions of becoming over protective.

My anxiety through this second pregnancy and knowing I will have to give birth has me overly emotional, scared and nervous.