

Submission
No 1163

INQUIRY INTO BIRTH TRAUMA

Name: Name suppressed

Date Received: 15 August 2023

Partially
Confidential

Submission to Parliament - Birth Trauma

I am 57 years old and gave birth to my children in March 1993 and May 1997.

I had private health insurance with my first child and an obstetrician attended to my ante-natal care through a private practice.

I attended ante-natal classes ran by the local public hospital.

My waters broke at home and I attended Hospital.

After 8 hours not much was happening but the amniotic fluid was dark and someone decided an induction was needed. The induction took labour from not much pain to back to back contractions with severe pain.

Then I had an epidural. The epidural did not work efficiently and I was in pain and exhausted.

I asked my Dr to give me a caesarian and he agreed. They prepared me for theatre and tried to top up the epidural which didn't work.

The Dr tried to extract the baby using "vacuum" extraction. By this time I was hysterical with pain and tiredness.

They finally gave me a general anesthetic and my daughter was born by Caesarian section at 8-52pm.

The birth was 20-52 hours after labour had started.

I wish that I was given an option for a caesarian earlier. I was in incredible pain for hours and hours and the labour was not going anywhere.

The prolonged labour made me exhausted and I ended up with a caesarean after a general anesthetic which meant I didn't get to hold my daughter straightaway. The drugs interfered with breast feeding.

Not long after the birth, I was diagnosed with post natal depression. Although I know this is extremely common, I was made to feel like a failure for having a prolonged labour and unable to give birth naturally.

I think the diagnosis of post natal depression was premature and in any case, in a few months once my daughter was sleeping more easily, my symptoms disappeared.

The diagnosis of post natal depression follows me to this day and insurance companies use it to try and deny claims.

More choices and information are needed for first time mothers.

If labour isn't progressing it should be up to the mother to decide when she is given a caesar.

More support for mothers in post natal period, like they do in Scandinavian countries.

Post natal depression should not be used against mothers for life by insurance companies. It is a hormonal and situational reaction to giving birth, sometimes without proper support.

This use of post natal depression as a means for insurance companies to deny or lessen liability in the future is re-traumatizing for me. Its a disgusting use of medical records.

14/8/2023