

Submission
No 1183

INQUIRY INTO BIRTH TRAUMA

Name: Name suppressed

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Partially
Confidential

My waters broke at 3am on Thursday, I then called Hospital Maternity Ward to inform them as I was informed in my regular midwife appointments while pregnant to call if this happened. They asked me to come in which I did. Once I got there they hooked me up to all the monitoring devices and did an ultrasound of the baby. They said to me due to my waters breaking but only being in early labour I would need to go home and labour there till either the contractions became 2 minutes apart and lasting at least 30 seconds or come in at 10pm for my booked in induction, they stated because my waters broke I had to come back no later than 12 hours to get antibiotics as the baby was no longer protected by fluid and I would have to be induced as well as was it was best, there was no choice or options given to me at this point, as a woman who has never been pregnant before and this was my first baby I trusted what the midwives and DR's were advising. I went home as requested.

The pain became unbearable by 12pm and needed some pain medication to help with the rest of labour, so I called and they advised to come in. Once I got to the hospital I waited in the waiting area for 40 minutes until a bed became available in the monitoring section of the maternity ward, once one became available they started monitoring me and baby but without any nurses checking on me for over an hour. They came in after an hour of monitoring and said I could move into a birthing suite.

Once in the birthing suite I was given options for pain medication which were Gas, morphine or epidural. I tried the gas which made me sick and the midwife would insist I have it and would force it in my mouth even when I would push it away my husband had to stop her 2 or the 3 midwives which I had did this to me. I proceeded to ask for morphine they said I wouldn't be able to get this until I had an internal exam which I agreed too. Upon the nurse attempting to examine me she was rough and I screamed in pain and was crying from how rough the exam was and she kept saying I cannot get any medication until she can tell how far dilated I am we attempted this another 3 times before she finally was able to get a good indication, which I had to bite down on a pillow to get through the pain.

The midwives changed over at 11pm and the previous midwife mentioned to the new midwife taking over I was asking for an epidural. The new midwife did an exam which was not painful this time and was done correctly and mentioned I was still only 6cms and called the anaesthesiologist for an epidural which I received within 20 mins of the call. The previous midwife did not call to get me one as requested.

The anaesthesiologist attempted 5 times to get the epidural in and kept hitting my spine which resulted in a surface hematoma which took 4 weeks to disappear.

Once the epidural was in the midwife consulted the Dr and it was indicated I HAD to have oxytocin to speed up the labour process which I was then given, but it was not something I was not consulted on, they kept saying my baby was not in distress so everything was fine so I couldn't understand why but I trusted their judgement as the experts.

By 6am on Friday the midwives did another exam and stated I was 10cms' but I had a hard lip on my cervix which was preventing the baby from dropping down the midwife increased the oxytocin to the max to get the lip to soften instructed by the Dr. I was advised around this point of tearing and if I would like to be cut if required to reduce the risk of tearing

which I said please control that with cutting as required please reduce tearing as I did not want this as I was advised my baby may have large shoulder based on ultrasound scans.

The midwives then changed again at 7am and they seemed under staffed at the point as my midwife kept leaving the room and only leaving the trainee midwife in my room which was not engaging with me and just looking at her computer. She seemed to get annoyed with me. I was in pain at the point as the epidural started to not work and I was told by the midwife it was all in my head and that they have increased the medication so I should be working and then leave again.

I kept mentioning I was in pain and I had extreme pressure and they did another exam and the hard lip on my cervix was still there and they just kept leaving I had to start screaming to get people to come in as I was in so much pain as I couldn't move to due to the epidural line to help reduce the pain they finally got the DR in the room which did a rough exam and made me scream in pain and they stated if it did not soften in the next 2 hours I would need an emergency C-section, by this point I have had around 8 exams.

I then laboured until 11am a total of 34 hours of labour, once I started pushing the midwives did not direct me just told me when I feel a contraction to push which was hard to feel with all the commotion. I didn't know what I was doing . I didn't know how to push properly I had never done this before and pushing and thinking about contractions is not an easy task so it resulted in me pushing at the wrong times due to lack of guidance and it caused a 3rd degree tear as they did not cut to control the tear as I requested.

Once my baby was out they proceeded to assist in delivering the placenta. I was given the injection and then they proceeded to press hard on my stomach and the placenta came out but then I started to haemorrhage and lost 2.5 Litres of blood.

I was then told that the tear would need surgery. I was then taken to the maternity ward once I had the surgery for my tear and was told I needed IV antibiotics over 3 days to reduce infection. On the 3rd day the DR's were struggling to get any cannulas in my arm I asked if I could have the antibiotics any other way and they said no. Once I started refusing them trying getting cannulas in as it was painful them attempting as my veins were collapsing the attending DR came in and had a look and said "her veins are collapsing you can't try anymore" to the residents and said I was fine to go home and I could take antibiotic tablets for the next 2 weeks as I have had enough through the IV, and that I would have to get a 6 week check up here to ensure its okay.

I was also told my blood count was low 60g/L (Normal Range is 120-150g/L) due to the loss of blood but they said I didn't need the blood replenished but an iron infusion would be enough, but they don't stock the Iron at the hospital so I had to send my husband out to the chemist to get this medication. I was then advised at my 1 week check at the GP that I should have been given blood as iron infusions can take up to 6 weeks for the blood to replenish.

My Dr also reviewed my discharge papers and advised that the loss of blood was not noted on there.

The hospital also did not contact me post giving birth for any check-ups on my 3rd degree tear I went to my GP just to make sure everything was okay as they mentioned they would.

Recommendations to improve based on my experience:

- More staff required to assist labouring mothers
- options given to parents and full extent of risks given
- Midwives to not let their personal views stop them from giving care that the patient is asking for
- DR's in the room when giving birth
- Follow ups 6 weeks post-partum