

Submission
No 1016

INQUIRY INTO BIRTH TRAUMA

Name: Name suppressed

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Partially
Confidential

It has taken me 8 years to mentally and emotionally be able to share tell the story of the trauma I had when birthing my second son, in 2015. This inquiry is my chance at sharing my trauma so future generations of women and my own daughter no longer have to live with such damaging memories.

March 6, 2015, I went to _____ Hospital _____ to be induced with my second baby.

I was 40+6 and after my first birth resulting in the use of a ventouse and episiotomy, I was eager to deliver my baby advocating for myself more and having a more controlled and calm space.

Staff were short in delivery suite that day, my waters were broken and I was left to labour alone. I asked for an epidural as that was my preferred choice of pain relief. When the epidural was being set up, there were two Midwives in the room chatting in the corner, I had to ask one of them to come and support me while I received the epidural. I was scared, frightened and alone. The caregivers who I put my trust in to help me and support me during the birth, had to be prompted to come and stand in front of me and give me some comfort.

My Labour started to progress really quickly. I asked my husband to get the Midwife as I felt there was something wrong and I was in excruciating pain.

A Midwife I had never met or seen before entered the room to check how many centimeters I was. _____

My epidural had failed and she declared she could feel the babies head and demanded I started to push.

I was using the Gas and Air for pain relief, she ripped the tube out of my hands declaring _____ leaving me to labour with no pain relief and no choice in the matter.

I was in agony telling her of my constant pain in my tailbone area, she said _____

My baby boy was born at 4:40pm, 8lb 14oz. The Midwife checked for any vaginal tears and proudly stated there was only grazing.

I was so exhausted and my body physically shattered from what had occurred that I didn't have the strength to hold my new baby. The baby I had longed for and waited 9 months to meet.

Due to how 'busy' the birthing suite was that day, I was

Uncapped needles from the babies injections sat in the kidney dish beside me for hours.

Once on the Postnatal ward, I stayed for 3 days. Numerous times I told the midwives something didn't feel right and my vagina was increasingly painful. I was told "Look at what you just pushed out! Of course you'll be sore". Not once was I offered an examination to find out the cause of my distress. I was pumped full of Ural and discharged day 3.

Once home, I took a mirror into the bathroom and lifted my leg onto the basin. What I saw was horrible, I could see my own tearing that was missed at the birth.

I called the postnatal ward and

as I had been discharged. I sat in ED for hours with my 3 day old baby as the midwives argued upstairs about who would go and assess the "distressed lady" in ED.

In short, I was seen to by a Midwife and Obstetrician. I was found to have vaginal tears that had been missed by the Midwife during the birth. I had Surgery the next day under a General Anesthetic for Vaginal Repairs. My tailbone was also broken during the birth. Not once was I offered alternative positions or even listened to when trying to describe that this pain was more than just the contractions.

It didn't need to hurt like this at all.

To add insult to injury, The nurse who caused all the trauma was the nurse I had back on the postnatal ward after my surgery.

"You're back", she stated, "I heard you had a tear? Must have been pretty far back!"

Not one ounce of remorse, not a single sorry, no compassion or empathy.

How many more women must endure such events? How can we allow these things to happen?

How can such a beautiful time of birthing your baby become so stained with trauma and grief. The memories don't fade. The grief stays stirring inside your heart and your mind for the decades that follow.

At 4 months Post partum, I was diagnosed with Post natal anxiety and depression. I was medicated and still to this day, take my "happy pills" as I will never be the same again. I carry so much guilt from that day. "I should have said more, I Should have stood up for myself more".

What irony, that I feel such Shame from a day where I shouldn't need to "stand up" to anyone. Birth and Bullies should not be in the same sentence, yet, how sad that they are.

We need change, and we need it now.