

Submission
No 1019

INQUIRY INTO BIRTH TRAUMA

Name: Name suppressed

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Partially
Confidential

I was a first time Mum (27) and had private health (private)

My son was early as my waters broke (36weeks)

Hospital/Obstetrician had my birth plan, which was a natural, calm birth.

I was given multiple antibiotics in case I had strep as testing was at 37 weeks which I didn't get to. I wanted to be tested to find out first as I was aware I am highly sensitive to medications.

I was told I had to get an epidural at 29 hours (as I wasn't dilating fast enough) or my son would be at risk of dying or an emergency caesarean would be required.

I was given syntocin without informed consent at birth – no one explained the risks/benefits.

I was given more drugs for headache and nausea (likely side effects from the other drugs)

Vacuum was used without explanation. Episiotomy performed resulting in stitches (more pain medication followed).

My baby was taken away to NICU and I was left without support from hospital staff (I couldn't move as epidural hadn't worn off)

I was bullied and pushed on my views regarding Hep B vaccination of a premature baby (all with valid reason and which I had discussed with my obstetrician, and he agreed we would wait till 2 months)

Treatment by midwife on arrival when I was scared as my baby was early and I asked if it was normal for me to still be leaking fluid – mockingly and condensingly, her reply in a demeaning tone was – of course, “what did you think you were going to have a dry birth”, the same midwife was annoyed and seemingly put out when I asked for a bath during my LONG (36 hour labor) and blankets for my husband for the couch. Our care and comfort were not a priority for her.

My son was in NICU and our hospital stay was 10 days. Some staff and lactation consultants were extremely down putting, degrading and unsupportive and did not listen to our wishes.

I was discharged and within a week admitted to a psychiatric hospital with psychosis (likely prescription drug induced). The treatment there was even worse and has caused so much trauma.

I have suffered PTSD, anxiety, depression from the treatment.

My second birth was just as traumatic. I had had a strep test at 37/38 weeks which was negative at the time. Same treatment by some staff/lactation consults. My daughter's Torticollis and foot deformity were missed by staff. My sister picked them up. I was discharged on day 4 with high blood pressure/puffiness. Blood pressure/headaches/pain continued to get worse. My family tried to get me readmitted for care, but due to my first birth experience it was put down to mental health and I was prescribed blood pressure medications by my OB (which did not work). I was not heard or listened to by my medical team and their communication with each other was highly inadequate and negligent.

I revisited my Obstetrician and other staff at (private) on numerous occasions, medication was increased every time even though my blood pressure was not coming down. Other symptoms (listed below) were completely ignored as well as my concerns that I could have streptococcus. Due to my history, it was put down to mental health.

I lost 14 kilos in two weeks, severe headaches, light/sound sensitivities, nausea, diarrhoea, bowel and urine incontinence, sweating, violent shaking, dizziness, disorientation, tachycardia, breathlessness and more. I thought I was going to die. I even ended up in emergency one night (code blue) with my blood pressure over 200. They were going to perform a spinal puncture and CT/MRI and other tests as blood tests indicated infection until they checked history, and it was again put down to mental health. Again, they just treated the symptoms with IV magnesium and discharged me.

Approximately 2 weeks after I gave birth I was put on antibiotics as a doctor suspected streptococcus. Results confirmed a strep infection over 600 (normal reading below 200).

I was then placed on more antibiotics to recover. Once the infection was treated and the useless blood pressure medication stopped, symptoms disappeared, and I eventually recovered physically. It took over 9 months. I had severe bouts of abdominal pain.

I do not know what symptoms were from the strep and which were from the medications and anxiety I had with everything I had to endure, all of this could have been avoided if a blood test for strep had been performed early on and my voice was heard when I said I had sensitivities to prescription drugs.

The psychological effects of these two ordeals have been massive and impacted all aspects of my life, and I no longer have trust in the medical profession.

I have had to spend thousands of dollars on treatment to address these traumatic events resulting from birth trauma and medical negligence.