

Submission
No 1022

INQUIRY INTO BIRTH TRAUMA

Name: Name suppressed

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Partially
Confidential

I was rushed into Hospital at 35.5 weeks pregnant in February 2022 with suspected kidney stones & excruciating pain where my midwife thought perhaps I was in pre term labour & that's where I spent the next 14 days. My experience in hospital was scary, unknown & where I almost lost my life. A rapid response call was put out late one evening as I had 10/10 back pain where I was profusely vomiting & became haemodynamically unstable & spiked a fever of above 38 degrees. Multiple teams including ICU medical staff stood at my bedside & directed orders to nursing staff about my treatment plan. They thought I then was becoming septic so prescribed intravenous antibiotics and intravenous fluids. I was incredibly unwell & didn't take much note of how much fluid I was having until after almost 24 hours of treatment I woke at 6am one morning & I noticed my eyes, face, legs & feet were all puffy. Walking to the bathroom was a huge effort due to increased breathlessness, I knew something was wrong & alerted the nursing staff. I could barely breathe I demanded to see a doctor where they confirmed I was fluid overloaded. I was taken for an urgent xray & found that I had pulmonary oedema where my lungs with batwing appearance. I was devastated as I knew that my baby would have to come out soon after due to the risk. The doctor admitted fault that due to multiple teams having input after the rapid response call that 10 litres of intravenous fluids had been ordered & given to me within a 24 hour window. My body then was unable to produce urine & I had anuria, blood tests were done for the next 2 days & showed my liver & kidneys were shutting down & said I was showing signs of HELLP syndrome. I was rushed to the delivery suite where they were planning to closely monitor me, during a routine check with the fetal Doppler my baby's heart rate began to drop & I was rushed to theatre for an emergency c section at 36+1. I cried the moment I left the delivery suite & for 12 hours after I had my beautiful boy. It was traumatic, this wasn't what I had expected, my dream birth gone out the window, my body shutting down right before my eyes, I felt it – the impending doom, I really didn't think I was going to survive to meet my baby. Everything that happened to me in the week leading up to birth affected how I bonded with my baby. My milk supply didn't come in, breastfeeding didn't work for us which was heartbreaking to say the least & I do believe it was from all the trauma caused in the lead up. I was sent home 36 hours after birth, way too soon but we felt like we were pushed out the door only to return again within 5 hours of being home as I again started to develop bilateral leg pitting oedema & high blood pressure. I bounced back to hospital x3 times after delivery due to my own health & what had happened prior. I was a fit healthy young woman with no pre existing health concerns, I had a dream pregnancy in the lead up so this was a total shock to both me, my partner & family. It was incredibly stressful & I still to this day get emotional thinking about my experience, even so am worried about future pregnancies & if this may happen again. I now drive 50 minutes to a different hospital because I have lost all faith in my local hospital after all they put me through.