

Submission
No 1031

INQUIRY INTO BIRTH TRAUMA

Name: Name suppressed

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Partially
Confidential

I finally fell pregnant 2018 after 11 years of infertility. It was through an ivf clinic in I had already gone through two laparoscopy procedures with this obstetrician, one for endo removal, the recoveries and bruising were bad, but had nothing to compare them with, so just thought that's how painful they can be. We were already having a dissapointing time with this obstetrician, you could say his bed side manners were lacking. But we did have success on our fifth embryo transfer. We were over the moon. We decided to use this ivf obstetrician for the pregnancy because my husband said quote "better the devil you know". It was a bad idea. I had a great pregnancy other than some bleeding at 10 weeks, all went well and my baby and I were very healthy.

But then comes the last month of pregnancy and this is when the doctors get their calendars out to put you into their schedule to birth the baby. I was penciled in for an induction at 39 weeks. I was so excited when my waters broke at home, I thought yay I can birth on my own time.

We called the hospital and packed up the car. We arrived just before midnight, the nurse called the dr and they were told to put me on a drip of medicine to start labor. A few hours later I was starting to dilate but didn't feel like I was actually in labor yet it felt still very early. It was only 6 hours later when I was examined again and I was at 5cm, they called the dr and he said to check me every hour and if I wasn't dilating 1cm every hour to let him know.

I felt so much pressure on me. I got to 6cm and the nurse told us our dr said I wasn't progressing so I needed an emergency c section . I was rushed into the shower then straight down to the theater room. Before we left the room I told my husband and mother "I hope they don't cut my baby", which my husband and mum both laughed and said they won't cut your baby. He was in so much of a rush he didn't even wait for the other obstetrician who was coming over from the hospital just down the road. I was never once told my baby was in distress or I was in a dangerous situation and I felt fine. So I was unsure why there was such a rush, but put faith in the dr and staff that they wouldn't take me in for surgery if it wasn't necessary. We had waited so long for this baby we just wanted to make sure she came out safe. During the c section I was feeling very nauseous. They put up the sheet so I couldn't see anything that was happening but let it down just as they pulled my daughter out, my husband was crying that our baby was so beautiful.

My daughter was crying too, but then the cries of being born were then turned into my dr saying oh wow I haven't done that in a while....he had cut into my babies head. Yep. The nurse grabbed her, let my husband fake cut the cord at the table, wrapped her, gave her to my husband to show me her little face then rushed her off upstairs to the ICU.

Meanwhile I was left down stairs being stitched up by Edward scissor hands, you think he would be apologizing, but instead he was ignoring I was even there and proceeded to talk to the nurse who was assisting him about my insides, that my uterus looked lousy and that it would have never of birthed my baby, and if she had ever seen one like that before, he also added that lucky that he had cut her head where her hair will hid it, that the last baby he cut was on their face. My

blood pressure was still dropping, so instead of taking me up to bond with my baby I had waited 11 years for, I was sent down stairs by myself. I had to wait an hour...I kept asking when can I go and see my baby, they just kept me there. Finally I was wheeled to the ICU to see my baby. She was laying by herself in the crib... by herself, with a plaster strip on her little head, surely my husband could have been holding her giving her comfort, but no nurse ever offered him that option.

So we were together at last, I thought well that was all a bit unfortunate but we are ok now we have our baby and maybe it's a common thing that happens with c sections. We were happy, we were so in love with our baby, we had won the infertility game at last. But I was in pain. I have experienced laparoscopy's and endo removal surgeries before, so I just thought maybe c sections just hurt more, but instead of the pain getting better over the next 4 days it was getting worse, I was having trouble pulling myself up out of bed, lucky I had my husband there he was doing 80% of the care for I had a few nurses come in for examinations and I would tell them about the difficulty I was having, they called my dr, he showed up and had a feel of my belly, said it all felt fine. He left.

Then the cramping started. I was feeling so ill, but the cramping was like nothing else, and I'm an endometriosis girl so I can handle my cramps. I called the nurses, they suggested it was because I hadn't opened my bowels yet since the birth. My dr confirmed this and so they started to give me laxatives. I was given an enema also. So I waited. Meanwhile nearly every family member who would visit me over those 4 days would mention how yellow my skin was looking. I also mentioned this to a nurse who said I looked fine. On the fourth day I had been given a mix of laxatives in the morning in the form of some sort of hot chocolate mint drink, but nothing was happening my cramps just got worse. So we asked for help again, they sent down the CMO who looked me over and wanted to run tests, but my obstetrician would arrive that night while the CMO was there, they both stood at the end of my bed, my obstetrician and his ego announced that he didn't think any testing was necessary and rattled off a list of reasons why, one of those were there were no signs of a hematoma, his closing words were " all she needs to do is a good dump and she will feel better", and that if I was still not feeling better in the morning they can do some bloods and testing then. They then left.

My parents arrived as my dr was leaving they passed him in the hall and explained to him I'm not one to make a fuss for no reason if I'm saying I'm not well then she really isn't. My dad bought me some broth, I had lost my appetite all day and couldn't eat, I really didn't want any but my dad insisted , I took two mouthfuls of clear broth and had to run to the bathroom to vomit, it was weird to me that I threw up all the laxative milk mix that I had been given at 10am, it was now 7pm. I called the nurse to come see, I thought I better let them know nothing was passing through my stomach.

Then the chills started, I was freezing, I was shaking uncontrollably, they started to take my temp, they never told me how high it was at first but my husband recalls seeing my temp being measured at over 40C, they kept telling me to take my hoodie off, I was delusional, I felt like I

was actually going to die, I had given up hope of getting any help at that point, I couldn't look at my baby I just paced up and down my room, grunting in pain every time a cramp would rise.

I looked at my husband and said why did they say wait until the morning for testing I won't make it until then, after that I don't even remember my husband leaving the room but he came back a while later and said another CMO will be coming down. I wish I remembered his name but this CMO saved my life, when he arrived he could see how unwell I was, he ordered testing, he started to try and take my blood but he couldn't take a sample as my blood had started to thicken and congeal. I think that's when he knew I needed a CT scan. A wheel chair was arranged for me as I couldn't even walk and was struggling to keep my eyes open at this point, they took me down for a scan, it was about 9:40pm, As I was wheeled in the sonography looked at me and said your really not well, I could hardly talk to answer. I had the scan, they wheeled me back into the room, the nurse was already in the room prepping my bed for surgery, the CMO returned with the scan, he said it looks as though my obstetrician has cut my bowel and that I have a pooling of poo inside my abdomen, I went into shock I thought that's it I'm gone, I had finally given birth after trying for this beautiful baby for 11 years and now I'm dying.

They said they had called my dr and he was coming back in to take me into surgery straight away, I started to cry, I screamed NO! Is there no one else?, I didn't want him touching me again, but they explained there was no one else at this time of night and if I was admitted with this dr I remain his patient. I was so scared I didn't want to go back under the knife with this dr, he met me and my husband before he took me back down to surgery and he explained it's not faeces but a massive hematoma, it had fused my bowel and uterus together causing a bowel obstruction.

He said that he will go back in and drain it, he also said he had tried to find another dr to assist him but couldn't so he will just be using a nurse.

I thought I was saying my final goodbyes to my husband and baby, as I was pushed out of the room, I quickly sent my mum a text message to take care of my husband and baby if I didn't make it out. I got to the theater room and by the love of god another dr had turned up to assist. I thanked him repeatedly.

When I woke up from surgery I already felt 70% better, they reopened me, patched up the bleeding then inserted a thick tube into my lower abdomen to drain the blood over the next few days. It was just by luck that I didn't have to see my obstetrician again while in the hospital, he had a vacation planned so I was passed onto the dr who had assisted him that night.

There is so much more to this story, but this experience not only has left me traumatized but also my husband, who ended up having a breakdown and had to leave me in the hospital the last few days to seek help for his mental health. Before all the drama with my hematoma, the nurses and my pediatrician all told me I should file a report about how my baby's head was injured during the c section, that it's a case of doctor negligence, as this dr is known within this private hospital for his massive ego and it was hinted at that I wasn't his only case of negligence.

Better care needs to be provided for women, I would have been happy to just be left with a group of midwives to take my time and let my body move at its own pace. I'm not naive about birth I know there are risks and complications, I'm not about refusing treatment for a legitimate danger. I just feel as soon as you walk into the hospital you no longer belong to yourself, the Dr just slots you into their time schedule, and this is wrong. The way I was talked to and treated was not only humiliating but neglectful, if it wasn't for my husband demanding another Dr to come see me that night I'm pretty sure the septic shock my body was going through would have caused more long term harm or even my death.

Thank you for reading my submission, it has taken a lot of energy to get this out onto paper. Let's hope for change.