

Submission
No 1037

INQUIRY INTO BIRTH TRAUMA

Name: Name suppressed

Date Received: 10 August 2023

Partially
Confidential

I was 29 in May 2022 when I gave birth to my son in hospital. I was under the MGP program and planning for a natural water birth. Unfortunately, my waters broke without labour starting and I had meconium in the waters and needed to be induced. During my induction the midwife felt my BP was getting high and wanted to test me for preeclampsia (although she was taking my blood pressure at the end of contractions). This meant I needed to have an in-out catheter without any pain relief as I had declined an epidural. The in-out catheter had to be done twice and the thought of it still brings on a visceral experience. It also interrupted my labour, threw my headspace, and made me feel incredibly violated.

While I laboured/dilated well, I was unable to push my 4.2kg son out and needed to go to theatre for a forceps delivery +/- c-section. While being consented for theatre the registrar consenting me told me to stop making noise in the middle of a contraction and listen to her. She also never consented me to the risks of forceps on my pelvic floor.

I suffered an avulsion injury to my pelvic floor resulting in months of urine leaking and shame. I've spent hundreds if not thousands on seeing a pelvic floor physio to rectify this injury that I wasn't adequately consented too.

I disassociated in theatre while they used the forceps to pull my son out. They did not do delayed cord clamping as my birth plan asked. The overall vibe of the experience was 'we're very busy today' - right from the time I called to inform that my waters had broken. When I arrived at the postnatal ward, I was left to sit in the bed covered in blood/meconium until my spinal wore off and I could tend to my own personal care.

My son had a tongue tie that the paediatricians were too busy to come and assess/cut during the first three days of his life. I was unable to breastfeed my son, the lactation consultant at one point walked out my room saying, 'she had lots of people to see' and didn't come back to assist even though she didn't complete my education around pumping/finger feeding. When the paediatrician finally saw and cut my son's anterior tongue tie it was 430pm and I was advised if I stayed overnight for assistance with breastfeeding, I would lose my 2 weeks of home visits. Luckily as I was on the MGP my midwife agreed to still see me if I stayed the extra night. But to be told I would need to choose between one night of breastfeeding support (from a pro breastfeeding hospital) or my two weeks or home visits was absolutely appalling. I was also not adequately informed that my son had a posterior tongue tie that would need private assessing, which I wasn't able to book in until he was 7 weeks old.

I didn't receive adequate breastfeeding support and needed to hire a private lactation consultant. My son only put on weight for two out of the first 10 weeks of his life.

Additionally, I have spent months and hundreds of dollars seeing a psychologist to overcome my birth and breastfeeding trauma. I will also need to continue this once I'm pregnant with a future child.

I'm a registered nurse myself and my treatment by the public system was appalling. I felt cheated by a system that I had championed and been a part of for many years.

As such I will be planning for a home birth for any future pregnancies.