

**Submission
No 1186**

INQUIRY INTO BIRTH TRAUMA

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At 11pm on the 09th of July 2021, I made the choice to go to hospital for pain relief as my daughter was posterior. The transfer from home birth to hospital was perfect.

I got to the hospital and thankfully the midwives on shift allowed my partner, my mum and midwife with me.

The epidural was in and working, so I was able to rest. During that time, I had progressed 7cm, but she hadn't turned.

The obstetrician showed up soon after, stood over me telling me I was in labour for too long, not progressing enough and he was not going to put Pitocin in as my uterus was exhausted and I would haemorrhage, so he wanted to do a c section now. When my midwife tried to have her say, he yelled at all saying I am not talking to you in talking to her. I told him thanks for the advice but I am not having a c section, so we agreed to wait two hours to see if I progressed. My mum followed him out to tell him how he spoke to us was disgusting, and at the end of the day my birth experience was paramount. He responded with "your daughter's birth experience is none of my business".

Two hours later I had progressed to 8cm, and my daughter had slightly turned. The obstetrician came in and still was telling me that I needed a c section, but I refused, and I asked for another two hours. So, he walked off said to the midwives "leave the door open I want them to hear this." He made a joke saying, "we may as well book her in for a c section Monday, I can wait".

Another two hours, I hadn't progressed, and my daughter turned back to where she was when I first presented at hospital.

My partner and I discussed the options with my private midwife, and I made the choice to have a c section.

In the surgery, I was not able to get first hold because I was not "sanitary", I was the 4th person to touch my baby. Even then I was not able to hold her properly, I had a drip in one hand that I had to keep still and with my carpal tunnel I lost feeling in the hand I had her in. I requested for delayed cord clamping and my partner to cut the cord, but I heard the obstetrician say, "that's enough cut the cord" and then my partner was not the one to cut the first.

My daughter was taken off me and given her to my partner to meet me in the recovery room once I got there and held for about 2 mins. Then the midwife freaked out that she was breathing too fast, grabbed my daughter off me and called the paediatrician. I told my partner to follow them. I sat in recovery high from pain relief, thinking everything was fine as no one came in to tell me any different. Meanwhile my daughter was put on a Capap machine, they were checking her sugar levels and wanting to put antibiotics in just in case she caught an infection. No one was really explaining to my partner what is happening, so he stood there thinking it is just a procedure and it was fine.

In the meantime, the obstetrician, had said to mum "she (me) is all fine, but haemorrhaged like i said she would".

I remember coming out of recovery, getting wheeled into room for and only seeing my mum and dad there, but not my daughter or partner. As I was high from pain relief I do not really remember much, however my partner confirmed the midwife and paediatrician came in asking for approval on the antibiotics, and feeling pressured and rushed we approved it as we were just wanting her to be okay.

Whilst we were waiting for my diagnose to come out of the nursery the midwife came into my room and asked for my approval to give my daughter the Vitamin K shot, I said no I don't approve and she then proceeded to talk down to me how I'm putting my child in danger, so I panicked and agreed to the shot.

At 3pm the christens nurse came in and confirmed that my daughter will be brought into me too, but I must be taken into children's ward and have the room temperature high, otherwise she must stay in the nursery. I did not understand why, because no one had told me what was going on.

At around 3:30pm, my daughter came to meet room, with a drip and all these cords on her and no one cared to explain why. I was transferred to children's ward at around 4pm, where they checked her blood sugars every 4 hours, and she was hooked up to so many monitors.

We recovered on the Sunday 11th July at 9am, I was told the obstetrician would come to check me and watch me walk so I could shower. It was not until 12pm I said I am. It is waiting anymore, got myself walking, showered. Later, a midwife appeared, wanting to put an injection in and mentioned that I had haemorrhaged during my birth.

That night my daughter cluster fed, and the nurse came in at 4:30am 12th July, to give me a break after my feed, I slept for two hours and heard my daughter scream from the drip being taking out and her bloods being checked. After that, both of us were so exhausted we slept and rested until around 9am. I did not know the nurses needed to take another test at 9am to discharge us, so I let her sleep and didn't make her feed.

After 9am, two paediatricians walk into our room, standing over us saying that my daughters sugar levels where 2.1 "too low" (apparently) and was throwing all these things at us like, she is not waking to feed because of the low sugar levels, she is exhausted, and this will affect her brain. They said we had to decide now between the drip or formula. However, both my partner had I thought we had managed to get them to agree to was for me to express and they do three more tests, and they need to be over 2.6 (which is the standard) so the midwives and I smashed the hand expressing and the first test was 2.8. So, I was cheering then they come back in, standing over the top of me saying not good enough, we wanted the next test to be over 3 not 2.6. I confirmed that is not what we spoke

about, the paediatrician ignored me and did not apologise for the miscommunication, he said I must decide drip or formula. I broke down in tears, asked them to leave to let us talk. So, we decided drip as it was still in her hand just needed to be hooked up.

But a few hours later her drip tissue, she was on my partner getting skin to skin while the nurses had rushed over without confirming what was happening. Next minute one of the paediatricians came in asking me why I said no to formula, explained his side about how formula is good, and then said "well it's drip or formula" I responded with drip, as I still was trying to work out what was happening to my daughter whilst he is trying to have a casual conversation. He said OKAY I will need to put a new drip in, but you are not allowed to come in with her. So, I stopped him and said no we will do formula.

During that day I was lucky enough to get some donor milk from a family member dropped off without the knowledge of the hospital staff. Every three time we hours I hand expressed and fed her, they would give us a bottle of formula and we would wait for them to leave, pour it down the sink and give her the donor milk. She scored 2.9, 4.7 and 3.4. During the afternoon I asked for a pump as my carpal tunnel makes it painful to hand express, the midwife said no as it is a waste of time because I would only get around 5ml out. Luckily enough the night shift midwife was so kind, got the pump for me and I was able to produce 20ml of colostrum each time I pumped.

13th July morning my daughter was meant to have a test at 6am, but the nurse said I am not going to do it any more she scored over 2.6 and that is standard. We had to wait around for this paediatrician to approve the scores, I was so scared I was not leaving, but we were able to go home that morning and we practically ran out of there.

It was not until 4 months postpartum (once Covid restrictions had been lifted) that I was getting anxiety attacks and scared by intrusive thoughts. I got counselling, where she had confirmed I was experiencing PTSD from my birth. I completed two sessions of EDMR therapy which had helped me.