

INQUIRY INTO BIRTH TRAUMA

Name: Name suppressed

Date Received: 14 August 2023

Partially
Confidential

I supported a woman as her doula at _____ Hospital in 2020. She had clearly stated in her birth plan that she did not want an epidural and that she wanted no routine intervention unless clinically indicated.

Her labour was straight forward and she was 7cm dilated when she arrived at the hospital. Her labour slowed on arrival at hospital somewhat, but all was clinically well. A VE was recommended and performed by the doctor. The doctor broke her membranes without her consent. The doctor did not explain that she was going to do this procedure.

An hour later, the woman asked the midwife if she should consider an epidural even though she didn't really want one but she wasn't sure how long she could go on. The midwife immediately said yes despite things progressing so well. I suggested that a VE be done prior to the epidural as I suspected she was very close to birthing. The midwife disagreed. The epidural was given and a VE was performed immediately afterwards which revealed the woman was 10cm dilated.

Later, when I debriefed with the woman she deeply regretted that the midwife didn't respect her birth plan and so readily organised the epidural. She had a lot of sadness that she didn't experience the birth she wanted despite doing 99% of the work physiologically. She went on to have postnatal depression.