

Submission
No 1109

INQUIRY INTO BIRTH TRAUMA

Name: Name suppressed

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Partially
Confidential

In the word document above, my husband and I recorded our recollections of my first birth in 2023. We took this to our obstetrician so that she could fill in any blanks that we had. Our obstetrician at _____ Hospital was Dr _____. She was outstanding. We had two debriefs about our birth with her with a total of just over 3 hours talking about my birth experience.

I have experienced a lot of physical trauma from my birth. I am now 15 weeks post partum and I haven't been cleared to complete any exercise besides swimming, walking and cycling. This is due to the injuries I sustained in birth as stated in my birth story. I also sustained a hip flexor injury from being in the stirrups whilst giving birth.

A mental trauma for me was not seeing my baby for the first 2 days as I was in ICU and she was in Special Care Nursery. These areas of the hospital are nearly a kilometre apart and we were both too sick to be moved. Another mental trauma was that I never got to have any skin to skin contact besides my baby being put on me for 10 secs or so after birth before she had to go to have CPAP. I have been able to access a psychologist through the _____ on a mental health care plan which has been helpful.

We had access to 6 weeks of antenatal classes which was helpful but I still think there needs to be way more education around what to expect post partum. Most of the antenatal information is about labour and not about what happens when you go home from hospital and how to parent your child.

I believe that we need more money invested into maternity care, particularly after birth so that families can access support in regards to the trauma they have experienced.

We need more funding for women's health physiotherapists in hospitals. Currently _____ Hospital only has funding for 2 days of women's health physiotherapists and it takes on average a month to get into them. This is way too long.

My Birth Story (NOTES IN CAPS)

Around 28th April, at my midwife appointment at the clinic, my blood pressure began to creep up. It was monitored at the hospital twice after this. At my doctor's appointment at the clinic on Tuesday 2nd May, my blood pressure was high again. The doctor admitted me to the Unit to be monitored. I was monitored here and they ran two tests to check for pre-eclampsia. These tests came back positive and I was then admitted to the maternity ward.

The midwife in said I wouldn't be going home until I had the baby (this shocked but the midwife actually turned out to be correct). On Wednesday 3rd May, I saw the doctors and they agreed that I needed to be induced earlier than they planned.

My induction started at 3pm on this day. I had the hormone tape inserted into my vagina. On Thursday 4th May in the morning, the doctors took out my tape to see if my cervix has softened and if I had begun to dilate. Nothing had changed. They discussed that I should have the balloons for induction to see if they would work (I didn't really want this). (REALLY DIDN'T WANT THE BALLOON AND WAS QUITE UPSET PLANS WEREN'T GOING ACCORDING TO WHAT SHE WANTED. SHE WAS ALSO UPSET ABOUT NOT TELLING HER FAMILY ABOUT HER BEING INDUCED) We decided on keeping the tape in until 3pm as it could be in me for up to 24 hours.

I went for a walk at around 10am and started to feel increased abdominal pain. We went to the birthing suite to be checked out and they said they thought I was beginning to labour. They sent us for another walk. We came back at around 12 midday and my pain had increased. (WASN'T SURE WHAT IT FELT LIKE UNTIL ONE OF THE MIDWIVES DESCRIBED THE ABDOMINAL PAIN THEN REALISED SHE WAS IN LABOUR CONTRACTIONS. ONCE THE MONITORS WERE HOOKED UP WE COULD SEE CONTRACTIONS AND TIMING) I'm not sure when my tape was taken out. (PRETTY SURE IT WAS ABOUT WHEN THE 24HOURS WAS UP)

I remained in the birthing suite and at 3pm my waters were broken by the midwife (the first midwife couldn't do it, she was a relatively young midwife that was still learning), labour had officially started. (THE MIDWIVES HAD TROUBLE WITH THE HOOK TO BREAK THE WATERS, THEY HAD TO GET THE ON DUTY DR FAHEEN TO GET IT IN THE END. SHE HAD DILATED PRETTY FAST IN A FEW HOURS TO ABOUT 3 OR 5CM OR SOMETHING. AT SOME POINT HAS A CATHETER INSTALLED, NOT MUCH FLUID CAME OUT DURING THE WHOLE LABOUR AND WASN'T CHANGED I DON'T THINK). I got through this part of labour with no drugs, just using techniques I had learnt from my book birthing skills. (helped with count down and that helped to focus) I was constantly on the band monitoring machine throughout my labour.(THE BAND MACHINES WERE SOMETIMES PRETTY FLAKY WITH EITHER NOT GIVING CORRECT READINGS OR FLAT BATTERIES. THEY TRIED THE WIRELESS ONES AND EVENTUALLY GOT IT WORKING. HAD A SHOWER AT ABOUT 6PM TO HELP WITH PAIN).

At 7:30, the pain was getting too much so I order the epidural. the anaesthetist came and put it in. At 10:30 my epidural stopped working. (THE EPIDURAL PUMP KEPT GIVING SOME BEEP ERRORS THAT THE FLOW WAS SLOW OR BLOCKED THEN WHEN TRIED TO USE THE BOOSTER BUTTON IT SAID BLOCKAGE. MIDWIVES TRIED TO GET IT GOING BUT IN THE END NEEDED ANAESTHETIST TO FIX IT) came back and diagnosed the problem as a kink in the tube. She was able to fix it without having

to take out and put back in my epidural. At midnight, the midwives checked to see how dilated I was. I was fully dilated and so the second stage of labour commenced. Not sure how long I actively pushed for though. (ABOUT 2 HOURS OR SO BEFORE THE MIDWIVES AND DR [REDACTED] DECIDED TAKING TOO LONG. [REDACTED] WAS BEING COACHED ON HOW TO PUSH AND TAKE SHORT BREATHS WITH HEAD DOWN AND PUSH FROM THE LOWER ABDOMEN. THE MONITORING MACHINES WE STILL BEING INTERMITTENT SO THEY ASKED IF THEY COULD GET A BETTER READING WITH THE HEAD HOOK PROBE AS WE COULD SEE [REDACTED] HEAD. TOOK A FEW GOES TO HOOK THIS ON. THIS HELPED THEM MONITOR BABY HEART RATE AND STRESS)

Towards the end of 2nd stage of labour, the midwife called the doctor (DR [REDACTED], THEN DR [REDACTED] ?? IN BLUE CAME DOWN TOO). The doctor asked if it was ok if they gave me an episiotomy, I said yes. They then asked if it was ok to use the vacuum on [REDACTED] and I said yes. They used it twice, on the second go, it popped off. [REDACTED] AND MIDWIVES WERE HELPING WITH [REDACTED] LEGS PULLING THEM BACK TO MAKE SPACE. They then asked if they could use the forceps and I said yes. ([REDACTED] WAS TOLD TO GET OUT OF THE WAY AND MIDWIVES DID ALL THE LEGS, NOT SURE IF DR [REDACTED] WAS THE BIRTHING DOCTOR, SHE DID THE SNIP (EPISIOTOMY) I THINK). This worked and [REDACTED] was born at 2:48 am.

She was put on me for about 30 seconds then she needed some assistance of CPAP, whilst receiving this, they realised she had severe head injuries from birth. She had a sub-galeal haemorrhage under her scalp that was bleeding as well as bruising on her head. She was taken to the special care nursery.

Whilst they were working on [REDACTED], the doctor started to count my blood loss. I started to feel bad and did some vomiting. ([REDACTED] FIRST FELT NAUSEAS, THEY GAVE HER SOME ONDANSETRON VIA CANNULA AND SHE THEN FELT BETTER. MIDWIVES HAD TO KEEP CHECKING IF SHE WAS ABLE TO HAVE SOME AND HOW MUCH. They called the ICU team. I felt better for a bit but then I started feeling bad again. SHE WENT PALE AND CLAMMY SHE VOMITED AND [REDACTED] H USED THE VOMIT BAG, AND THE DR'S GAVE HER ANOTHER MEDICATION AND REALISED BLEEDING AND THE UTERUS NOT FULLY CLOSING SO THEY ALSO GAVE HER SOME MEDICATION VIA DRIP TO MAKE MUSCLES CLOSE UP, [REDACTED] GOT THE SHAKES FROM THAT BUT THAT WAS EXPECTED THEY EXPLAINED BEFORE GIVING IT. They asked if they could take me to theatre to stop my bleeding. I was told the risks of theatre and that I might need a historectomy if they couldn't stop the bleeding. I had to sign a consent form which I found hard as I was feeling so sick. [REDACTED] ASKED IF HE COULD SIGN ON HER BEHALF AND WAS TOLD ONLY SHE WAS ABLE TO SIGN. I was able to sign it and off I went to theatre. [REDACTED] WAS ASKED IF HE WOULD LIKE TO WALK TO THEATRE BUT IT WAS THEN TOO MUCH AS BOTH GIRLS WERE GOING SEPARATE WAYS! I DECIDED TO STAY WITH [REDACTED] AND SEE HOW SHE WAS DOING IN SPECIAL CARE. NURSES WERE GOOD WITH SUPPORT BUT I WAS OK JUST TIRED AND EMOTIONAL AND WORRIED. I was conscious the whole time in theatre. My pain relief of the epidural is what I had. During theatre, I was still vomiting a bit.

They were able to clean me out and stop the bleeding. Whilst inside, they found some retained placenta which they also got out of me. I was then taken to recovery and then ICU for 2 days. I WAS ABLE TO GO UP TO RECOVERY HOLDING BED AFTER [REDACTED] WAS DONE, SHE WAS A BIT DAZED BUT IN GOOD SPIRITS AND CHATTY TO THE DOCTORS AND NURSES! Meanwhile, [REDACTED] was in Special Care receiving treatment for her injuries. She was nearly sent to [REDACTED] to the NICU but luckily, she towed the line.

After 2 days in ICU, I was transferred to maternity ward. This was 2 or 3 days after giving birth. I had not seen _____ during these first few days as I was too unstable to be moved and so was _____. Once I got to maternity, I was wheeled in my bed to Special Care to see _____ for the first time in the flesh. I couldn't touch her as I was too far away from her in my bed. I watched her though. This is what I did for the next 2 days or so as I was still bed ridden.

Once I was out of my bed, _____ wheeled me over in the wheel chair and I began to breastfeed and got some lessons on it too. We did this for a few days. On Tuesday, _____ was discharged from Special Care at Night. She had 3 nights in maternity with me before we finally came home on 12th May, exactly a week after her birth.

How many days total = 10 full days, left on the 11th day.