

**Submission
No 1142**

INQUIRY INTO BIRTH TRAUMA

Name: Mrs Renee Symons

Date Received: 9 August 2023

16th January 2017. I was 40+3 weeks pregnant, went into labour naturally at 1am and laboured at home until around 5am when I went to hospital. The team weren't happy with how slow my labour was progressing so they put me on an oxytocin drip which made my tolerable contractions intolerable, coupled and less than a minute apart. (I was unaware at the time that I could have declined the drip and be left to labour alone). By 11am I was still only 3cm dilated so the drip did nothing but make my contractions unbearable. I requested an epidural and was granted one, it worked perfectly until after about 4 hours when it began to wear off. The OB and midwives didn't believe me when I told them that I could feel pain, and they kept trying to up the rate of infusion through the epidural.

5pm and only at 9cm, I was made to push for an hour and a half. The OB attempted delivery with the assistance of forceps (brutally as she believed I couldn't feel anything). After failed attempts with the forceps, she tried 3 attempts with the vacuum which also failed.

I was then taken to theatre for more attempts at the vacuum and if they failed, a c-section would be performed. It wasn't until the anaesthetist did the ice test on me before they realised that I was telling the truth that the epidural had worn off and I could feel everything. I was given a spinal block in theatre where 3 more attempts at the vacuum were performed, and an episiotomy resulting in successful delivery of my son, who had a sub-galeal bleed as a result of the multiple vacuum pulls. He was taken to the NICU, I was taken to recovery and left alone for 2 hours before being taken to NICU to properly meet him.

I received an apology from the midwife during the home visit, but no offers of counselling or any opportunity to discuss the ordeal with the OB. My birth trauma resulted in waiting six years before having another baby, and opting for an elective c-section for the delivery out of fear of any resemblance of my first labour. I am fortunate in that both my son and myself are healthy, however the lack of communication, trust and support from my delivery team made my experience something I wouldn't wish upon anybody.