

Submission
No 1268

INQUIRY INTO BIRTH TRAUMA

Name: Name suppressed

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Partially
Confidential

Began midwife/GP program with my local Public hospital. First child, IVF. I had gestational diabetes and low iron. Taking insulin and iron tablets. It was not a smooth start but issues began when I was on high alert for pre-eclampsia. After daily blood pressure, blood and urine tests at the high risk prenatal I was told blood pressure was dangerously high and I needed to be induced that night.

I was induced at midnight 37ish weeks. The induction was painful and forceful with drip and gas. Asked for epidural and as I was getting prepared I felt urge to push. Midwife checked and said not dilated enough. I said yes I'm pushing it's coming naturally, she said no need not dilated but will get doctor. Doctor came as said baby's head is there I need to prepare for birth right away.

Epidural cancelled, began pushing uncontrollably (everything moving very fast). Obviously was further dilated and ready. Pushed baby out in 3 goes extremely hard then doctor left room for midwives to take over. I then felt heat on legs then no sensation. I was pushing placenta out but wasn't working. I yelled for baby to be taken off me as I was getting into shock. Midwife called doctor back into room, doctor alerted emergency surgery and room was filled ready for surgery. I had PPH and lost 2.5L of blood. (Kidney function problems now and on blood pressure tablets since the birth)

Had surgery for D&C woke up and went into recovery. Best intentions from nurses but could not breastfeed due to significant blood loss, my body was not producing. I wish I wasn't forced to in the bad state I was in. Had blood/iron infusions began slight depression/baby blues I'm assuming normal however was completely traumatised after thinking I was going to die. Seemingly was on the mend and went home after 5/6 long days.

Was at home for only 8hrs and began hemorrhaging again upstairs after going to bathroom. Rushed to local hospital which directed us straight to larger city hospital emergency. Was in resus, had a young nurse rip vaginal stitches to try and insert catheter - herself and senior nurse urged doctor give me pain relief as I was screaming in agony.

Ultrasounds & Ct scans we're done and they could not find the cause of bleeding - assumed retained placenta but could not find. Stayed in general ward that night. Asked if I could have baby with me for bonding and semi breastfeeding. Was told could not due to Covid laws and ward restrictions. She could visit during hours. This is when I hit severe PPD. I was in for a number of days and kept urging doctors if I could have baby with me so I wasn't alone, said not able to, asked if I could go back to maternity ward, said no room and they are too busy. I faked feeling better so I could be home with my newborn. After a few days had passed I became numb and completely disassociated from everyone and baby. I did not want baby to come and visit - did not want to go home anymore, did not speak.

When finally moved to maternity ward I was not bonded with baby. Went home with severe depression. Had such a traumatic birth that I was mentally sick. Yes was offered help at face value but refused because, well, I was mentally unstable. Continued to bleed for 3 months after birth!!!

Doctors said it's common after birth. Finally went to emergency and got through to doctor who noted my anemia due to constant bleeding. He gave me options for resolving possible placenta retrieval. After speaking with my hormone specialist he advised to not listen to other doctors but to begin taking my HRT. Within a week my bleeding stopped and I painfully passed through a piece of placenta.

During the 3 months I was suicidal, hiding my trauma and telling everyone that I'm healed and better. I finally built up the courage to tell my husband my suicidal thoughts in the fear of my baby's safety. I began therapy with a counsellor then psychologist. I then visited the hospital a year later for a trauma consult/debrief to gain some clarity about what went so wrong as I had so many questions and was so damaged from the entire scenario.

Almost 2 years of trauma have brought me think could things have been done differently, more prepared, alert, investigating into patient concerns. This event has forever left a mark on connection with my child.

I am leaving it up to the professionals to determine whether this is normal and what should normally happen in this scenario or if things could have been dealt with better/differently for a better outcome.

Main concerns:

- pre-eclampsia was not taken seriously enough and treated the birth as normal
- blood loss amount could have been lessened > after effects
- allowing less experienced to insert catheter in emergency
- not allowing baby to stay with mother - crucial time - evidently caused major harm/disconnect
- bleeding to continue for 3 months too long