

Submission  
No 1343

## INQUIRY INTO BIRTH TRAUMA

**Name:** Name suppressed

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Partially  
Confidential

To whom it may concern

My name is \_\_\_\_\_ and I'm from \_\_\_\_\_, NSW. I'm 33 years old and I now have an 11 month old son.

I had a very difficult pregnancy and this was due to suffering Hyperemesis Gravidarum the entire time. I struggled to get pregnant as a long term sufferer of endometriosis and ovarian cysts. I was so happy to be pregnant with my first child even though I had a rough time. I wanted to be ready physically and emotionally so I enrolled in a birth class locally with my husband.

This is where my birth trauma began and I didn't know it at the time. I was 36 weeks pregnant and of course nervous with the time coming up quickly and I wanted to try a natural birth but was happy to go with the flow as I understand you cannot predict what will happen when the time comes.

\_\_\_\_\_ from \_\_\_\_\_ conducted our class. It began quite friendly and a relaxed environment. It became quite clear early on in the days lesson that \_\_\_\_\_ was anti epidural and very much an advocate for natural birth and that as a woman we are built to be able to birth a baby naturally and without pain relief. It was almost an awkward tone set on discussing options for pain relief beyond panadol or using a tens machine (which she hires out coincidentally). During the class she kept giving a negative response to epidural related questions and made a comment of "I would never let anyone stick that needle in my spine" and multiple comments about having an epidural will end up with a 90% chance of an interventional birth and being "bed bound". The commentary and negative attitude was enough to put the fear in me of requesting an epidural and the guilt I should feel as a woman who asked for one.

Toward the end of the 6 hour session \_\_\_\_\_ decided to physically show us how having an epidural will impact our birth. She proceeded to getting one of the fathers up as an example. She dressed him in the hospital gown, got him to lay down without moving his legs, put a tube and taped it to him like an epidural would be. This was quite scary of course. But then she said once epidural was administered we would be bed bound and need an assisted birth. She then brought out a suction cap and a pair of forceps and showed us how they work. This was extremely confronting for those who have not been exposed to forceps and her tone was as though it was the choice of epidural leading you to this. Then of course mentioned the tearing or episiotomy which of course can happen but insinuating that the epidural would mean it was inevitable.

I left the class being absolutely terrified of getting an epidural during birth. I was rattled by seeing the forceps in person and \_\_\_\_\_ even mentioned that she shouldn't have a pair on hand as they belonged to a hospital and she's taken them to show in her classes. Same with the suction cap.

On August 23rd, 3am I went into labour naturally at 38w6d gestation. I don't want to elaborate on the day minute by minute because I think I have blocked a lot of it out of my mind still. All I remember was being absolutely petrified of getting an epidural and then needing the forceps after seeing them in the class by

I labored naturally for 23.5 hours and using the tens machine that had hired out. It got to the point where my body physically could not endure anymore pain. My son was posterior and now stuck in the birth canal with his arm up and I had no pain relief. My body went into shock and was shaking uncontrollably and the midwife and my husband said it would be recommended to have the epidural and I cried and agreed. About an hour later I birthed my son and because he was posterior and stuck with his arm up the OB had to rotate my son first with the suction cap and if not successful it would be an emergency C-section. Thankfully he did this and then had to use the forceps and do the episiotomy for me to push my son out. My beautiful son was born on 24th August at 3.55am.

My birth experience was traumatic before I even went into labour. I was falsely informed that there was something wrong with needing to get an epidural from a trained professional who I trusted to educate me before birth. I felt guilty if I needed help and that I wasn't a strong woman if I requested pain relief. In my birth situation it would have been incredibly difficult to birth without pain relief. Me going into shock from the pain of spine to spine with my son during birth was traumatic and the pain I felt still haunts me today.

After the birth we had to return the tens machine to at . I couldn't even go down the street she was on without feeling sick and as if a panic attack was coming on. I couldn't look at the machine or anything to do with the business run by I've not felt comfortable to discuss my birth with anyone because the words are muddled by me crying hysterically. I tortured my body because made me feel like I was not a mother or a woman if I asked for an epidural.

I hope she hasn't impacted many other women with her methods and I have been traumatized by her actions.