

Submission
No 1410

INQUIRY INTO BIRTH TRAUMA

Name: Name suppressed

Date Received: 12 August 2023

Partially
Confidential

I had my first birth in May 2020 through Private hospital. It was during the height of covid. There was much talk about if my husband had covid at the time would not be able to be there for the birth of our child & birthing in this time period was already traumatic as it was. During the birth I had vaginal examinations performed without receiving any evidence based information on this. It was simply "I'll check to see how it's going" etc. I wish I was more informed and provided more information to be able to simply say No. At times during these checks it felt like a violation but I thought it was just what HAD to be done & wasn't even aware I could say no. After birthing my baby I wasn't even given the opportunity or wasn't even aware that I could have had a physiological third stage birthing of the placenta - I was simply told - Okay I'm going to give you a quick needle now - I wasn't even aware what it was for or what it was doing. I was never given any information on delayed cord clamping or any evidence based information everything was done purely by the hospital policies or OB thoughts. I had no idea the benefits of delayed cord clamping for the full time until the cord had stopped pulsating and gone white and the huge potential benefits this could have given my baby. There was no visitors of any kind during my 4 day stay. Being a first time mum this was absolutely traumatic. Approaching a new era of life with little to absolutely no support caused serious emotional trauma. I felt scared having myself and newborn baby in my room with no support. When I happened to go into spontaneous labour at 37 weeks my OB was shocked to see someone birth spontaneously with no intervention - that says something in itself. Although having an OB. when turning up to hospital I was having contractions but was only 3 centrimeres dilated - I was told to stay and if I wasn't in labour in the morning they would break my waters - I was scared this was absolutely not what I wanted - I knew if J stayed that would happen because it wasn't the right environment to help labour progress. I went home and not long after my waters broke but I would've hated to have seen what I would have been coerced into should I have stayed.

Post this birth I went on to have 2 home births in- one on 2021 & 2023 both with private midwives. I'm not extremely lucky to have been able to afford these but these completely changed my perspective on birth and helped to heal the trauma from the first birth. I felt absolutely in control of every decision having been given all the evidence based information. Everything was done with informed consent. nothing was just told it was going to be done. It's absolutely amazing what your body can do when it's left to do what it's meant to. Unbiased evidence based information should be available to everyone and should be mandatory when receiving care to ensure that each individual can make up their own choices and feel empowered to make their own choices on what they think is best for them and their baby. Publicly funded homebirth should be a priority. It was these births that reversed the trauma of the first birth and brought some peace to the emotions. Having this as an option for many would allow undisturbed healing births that would likely not leave anyone traumatised. There needs to be a legislation overhaul on informed consent to ensure no one continues to be violated by just being told & these invasive checks being carried out.