

Submission
No 1347

INQUIRY INTO BIRTH TRAUMA

Name: Name suppressed

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Partially
Confidential

Things that were traumatic about the birth of my second child in May 2020 at Hospital:

- Being moved from group midwifery practice care to 'high risk' for a very minor reason then receiving zero consistent care for the last third of my pregnancy. Consistent messaging from 'high risk' information that birth would end up needing intervention and c-section, despite normal first time birth.
- Being sent for growths scans and the technician tried to contact the referring dr to question if I needed to be admitted for an induction or not and the number on the referral was for a mechanic. No way for contacting referrer.
- Waters broke at 36 +6 on a Friday night. Presented to hospital after midnight so considered as 37 weeks. (This was good). Given option to be induced that am or wait 24hours (this was good) Chose to wait. Had to be admitted to maternity ward due to GBS status unknown (despite having done test 36hrs earlier).
- Had to follow up multiple times over next 24hrs if GBS status results had been checked. Remained unknown as no-one checked. Not offered antibiotics.
- Went in to natural labour early hours of Sunday morning. Could feel progressing fast. Asked to move to birthing suite. Was dismissed as being false labour. Continued to progress quickly. Asked again to move to birthing suite. Said they'd 'investigate' but did nothing. Baby birthed on maternity ward 30mins later as staff did nothing to initiate a move to birthing suite as requested twice.
- Transferred to birthing suite for delivering placenta.
- Baby had low blood sugars.
- Dr called, walked in, said very accusingly 'your waters were broken and you never had antibiotics and you were GBS positive last pregnancy so you are therefore considered to always be GBS positive and now you need to stay here for minimum 48hours otherwise your baby might die from GBS'
- Baby taken to special care for bloods. Tried to take baby without parent. Made me walk up to special care because I insisted on not being separated from my newborn baby.
- Threatened my baby with special care admission if I didn't feed formula (due to low blood sugars)
- Agreed plan with medical team to try breastfeeding first then formula top up as needed.
- night nurse accused me of trying to do harm to my baby by breastfeeding, took baby away from me, forced formula feed, said 'there, see they were hungry' and then baby vomited due to too much volume. When blood sugars borderline at next testing accused me that it was my fault for delaying formula and 'making baby vomit'
- told Monday am by nursing staff that I would be able to go home that day as baby had stable blood sugars and nil temps for GBS monitoring. I questioned that had been told I needed to stay 48hrs (Tuesday am) but they said no, today should be fine. Waited all day for dr review, arranged care for my toddler at home (who wasn't allowed to visit the whole time due to covid restrictions and was highly distressed at our separation). Dr attended early evening and said I couldn't go home because of needing to wait 48hr for monitoring due to nil antibiotics (none ever offered) and previous GBS positive status. Told me I would be discharging against advice and my baby was at risk of dieing. I tried to say that I had completely understood the 48hrs monitoring and had never asked to be discharged early, the whole thing was initiated by nursing staff but this had caused significant issues with planning for care for my other child.

-agreed to stay overnight on condition that we would discharge in am at the 48hr mark. Dr agreed to do medical check of baby so we could leave early in am.

-Was told in am that dr had not documented our conversation or their review of baby.

Overall... Poor communication++ on multiple levels and lack of coordinated care made for a highly distressing and stressful birthing experience.

Everyone deserves a coordinated and consistent care approach, ESPECIALLY high risk pregnancies- those women are so incredibly vulnerable.

Everyone deserves to be treated with respect.

Covid visiting restrictions exacerbated the whole thing.