

Submission  
No 1430

## INQUIRY INTO BIRTH TRAUMA

**Name:** Name suppressed

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Partially  
Confidential

My name is \_\_\_\_\_, I live in \_\_\_\_\_, I am 38 years old, and I have a 12-month-old baby girl.

I was lucky enough to be accepted onto the MGP Program through \_\_\_\_\_ Public Hospital, which I found to be an extremely positive, supportive and patient centered level of care throughout my entire pregnancy, including post-natal care.

Unfortunately, when I was 40 weeks pregnant, I had a fall and ended up having to be induced. This was something that I never wanted to happen, however, due to the circumstances, I had no option but to agree to the induction.

My birth was traumatic, no other word describes it better. The fall did contribute to some of the trauma, however, the way I was treated in \_\_\_\_\_ Hospital during the induction and birth has left me feeling scared, angry, traumatised, violated and absolutely terrified to go through another labour. Below are the contributing factors.

Lack of introduction, communication or consent for a Resident Doctor to insert the Foleys Balloon into my vagina. I was taken into the birthing suite by a midwife. She prepped me for the Foleys Balloon to be inserted into my vagina. She explained how it was going to be inserted, she put my legs in stirrups, and we waited for the doctor to arrive. I was extremely stressed and anxious at this time. The doctor rushed into the room with another person. Neither of them introduced themselves or even looked at me, rather, they began organising themselves to perform the induction. The main doctor was explaining how everything works to the other person that was with her, even telling her how to put gloves on correctly. I was already feeling stressed and anxious, and this made me feel even worse. While they were prepping themselves, I asked the midwife who the other person was. She told me it was a Resident Doctor and later I found out that it was her first day in the birthing suite, having no experience with obstetrics. The Resident Doctor sat at my vagina, she didn't look at me, she didn't speak to me, she didn't introduce herself or explain what she was about to do to me. In fact, no one asked me permission if it was ok if a junior doctor with no experience could perform the induction on me. The Consultant that was supervising her didn't speak to me either, rather, she watched the Resident Doctor insert the balloon into my vagina SEVERAL times. She could tell that I was in pain and extremely uncomfortable, yet she continued jabbing the balloon inside of me until the midwife told her to stop. The consultant kept telling her she was doing it wrong and to pull it out and do it again. At this point, I was crying as I was so stressed. The Consultant eventually told the Resident Doctor to move away, and she successfully inserted it the first time. Neither of them apologised or asked me if I was ok. The Consultant jokingly told me that I had strong vagina muscles and swiftly left the room. My partner and I were left feeling violated, traumatised and stressed and I hadn't even begun my labour. I had to stay in overnight and the midwife was to break my waters the following day.

Lack of wireless CTG monitors – I was informed on the morning of my induction that there is only one wireless CTG monitor for seven birthing rooms. The one wireless monitor was in use, so I was bound to the bed until it became available. For a hospital to only have one

wireless monitor is disgraceful. I felt very anxious and stressed at the thought of having to lie on a bed for my entire labour.

Poor communication and empathy from the Consultant on duty in the birthing suite – Unfortunately, my induction had some complications, and the consultant was called in by my midwife to review the situation. She entered the room with two male doctors, neither of them introducing themselves. The Doctor took 15 seconds to observe the current situation and quickly said to me “sometimes plan A doesn’t go to plan, we are going to plan B and that is a caesarean. Do you consent?” without any consultation with anyone (classifying it as a category 1/2). How am I supposed to make an informed decision and consent to something when I have been given absolutely no information of what is happening to my own body. The room filled with people, I had a man waving a clipboard in my face asking me to sign on the dotted line as people pulled earrings out of my ears and pushed me out of the room. My partner was taken away, I had no idea where he went. Due to her lack of communication, empathy and lack of effort to explain the situation to me or my partner, I went into complete shock thinking the worst-case scenario, that there was something seriously wrong with my baby or my baby was going to die. If she had taken the time to explain to me the reason for her decision and given us an opportunity to ask questions or seek clarification so I could make an informed decision, the situation would have been a lot less traumatic and stressful. I’d also like to note that she did not communicate with the midwife, rather, swiftly leaving the room when I consented to the surgery, never to be seen again.

Uneven cut causing complications – The Registrar on duty carried out the surgery under the supervision of the Consultant. My caesarean cut is very uneven and lopsided, like an amateur has completed the surgery. Since the surgery, I have had ongoing complications (please see photos attached). I had numerous scans and ultrasounds and the results of that are that the surgeon has cut into my rectus abdominis muscle (20 cm in length), causing the muscle to retract, thus, my scar is permanently lopsided. Having ongoing complications in my post-partum period was not a positive experience and is inhibiting me from moving on from my traumatic experience of having my baby.

I made a complaint to \_\_\_\_\_ Hospital post birth, stating the above information. They responded very quickly to begin with. The Consultant that I saw was sorry for the way I was treated, but was also quite defensive of her colleagues, she dismissed my complaints rather quickly. She looked at my scar and she called it ugly. She sent me away and asked me to come back 3 months later. I returned 3 months later for a follow up review of my scar. The same doctor I spoke with months earlier asked if I wanted another baby, which I do. her response was, "Great, we can fix your scar once you have another caesarean." I stated that I did not want to have another caesarean, as I would like to try and have a natural birth. She rolled her eyes at me and asked me what she would like to do. I left the hospital feeling very upset, angry, dismissed and not listened to. They rang me days later to tell me that I would have to go through my GP and get a referral to a plastic surgeon, at my own expense if I wanted to get a second opinion on my scar. The hospital has wiped their hands clean of my complaint.

If it wasn't for the MGP Program and the midwife that supported me throughout this traumatic experience, I am certain that I would be diagnosed with post-natal depression. My midwife spent hours with me post birth, listening, supporting and guiding me through my experience. She stayed with me the entire day of my birth, she was the only one that communicated with me, attempted to help keep me calm and ensured that I was going to be ok. I will be forever grateful for her support and care throughout my entire pregnancy and postpartum period. The continuity of care is what got me through this experience and all women should have access to this magnificent program.