

Submission
No 1395

INQUIRY INTO BIRTH TRAUMA

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Date Received: 11 August 2023

Partially
Confidential

I gave birth at Hospital on the 30.01.2022

This was my first birth.

I arrived around 1pm and buzzed into the birthday unit, was greeted with attitude because I did not phone ahead, I waited in the hallway for 40 minutes in discomfort and pain when contracting.

I finally got taken through to the assessment area, my fiancé was not allowed with me, my dilation was checked and I was advised I was 2cm, given a speech of this is normal for your body to be going through and advised to go home for 4 hours and come back, that they couldn't give me a room until I was 5cm, I said it was my first, I was here because I was worried at home as the pain had gotten worse quickly, I questioned whether I wasn't allowed to stay in hospital

Midwife replied "no, you can definitely stay here, you can walk around the hospital"

I asked what to do about my pain, she said she can give me painkiller however I would need to stay in the assessment bed if I took it (without my partner)

I optioned no painkiller to be with my fiancé - walked the stair case down a level and contracted in complete discomfort of a waiting room for 2 hours until it was too much.

I went back up and asked for the pain relief and had to stay in the assessment bed, without a nurse buzzer in sight or advised where one was. And besides the original painkillers and blanket offered, I was not checked up on again.

My cries where loud, it makes me want to cry writing this knowing how sad and painful my cries where that were ignored, without a support person.

I was messaged my brother and sister in law as they just had a baby a year prior and where giving me suggestions to try help, cup of ice, massage, shower etc.

all things I had no access too nor did I have a buzzer, nurse checking or just one support person with me.

I was absolutely balling my eyes out crying with so much emotion of being alone, it was uncontrollable and loud, then my body would contract and my cry would become an even louder cry out of pain.

The nurse desk was 5m away, only 4 bed's operating and 2 nurses - half the time the bays where not full.

While crying I listened to them stand around complaining about the student nurse who "did too much", I wished that student nurse was there because I was not even getting the bare minimum duty of care, I did not feel worthy of their time in a time I was beyond vulnerable, scared, alone and experiencing this for the first time.

I estimate I was around 8cm at this point, despite being in ear range I had to cry out to the nurse 3 times before one came and stuck her head in the curtain and asked if everything was ok, I said I think my waters broke, she lifted the blanket and said oh yes, you've made a mess (in light banter)

I was in a nighty - my nighty and undies were drenched

I was given a small towel, bed sheet and a bed liner "these make perfect undies"

All while my partner was in the hallway with my bag - I was directed to a single toilet to clean myself up

I was expected to hold my bed liner undies up, a bedsheet over my body

And carry the towel and my dirty nighty and undies ... with two hands in an open assessment area

I spent about 10-15 minutes in toilet crying and groaning in so much pain, all I achieved was to take my undies off before the nurse knocked and asking if I was ok, I said no, she said come out and I heard her foot steps walking away.

When I came out I walked slowly, oh so slowly because every movement brought on a contraction, past the desk I got just past before the nurse questioned where I was going, I said to my partner, she literally said "what can he give you that we can't", I responded with support.

I was GBS positive and because my waters broke, I needed the antibiotic drip in, I said I wanted a room so my partner could be with me, she admitted that I needed the drip there and then and she would look into whether I could get a room after we did the drip.

I said no, I knew she was delaying getting me a room still and I didn't want the drip till I was in a room, she then questioned whether I was refusing the drip and putting my baby at risk with attitude. I said no, I wasn't refusing, I will happily have it.. in a room

Finally, we concluded on I was allowed to go to my partner to clean myself up which I showered in the hallway bathroom - then came back in and had the drip in the assessment room

She was unable to get my vein and said she needed to call the birthing nurse to do it, I was finally given a room, my partner still had to be covid tested I kept asking if she could prioritise him being tested so he can come in faster, she was not very assuring that that was any priority for her, in the room I had to ask for the gas to be connected and again, it was as if it was an unrealistic request with her body language and tone in response.

My partner walked in 1 contraction before I was in active pushing labour.

My partner was there from 2cm with me and walked in at 9.9cm basically

He walked into such a chaotic atmosphere

When I first went into the assessment area, nurse asked if I had a birth plan

I said to have my partner with me and epidural.

I didn't think I was requesting much, but those two simple things where not met.

I gave birth without an epidural not by choice, not by delay, not by the doctors schedule. But by the lack of care from two nurses in the assessment bay who neglected to check-in or acknowledge my contracting cries, groans and signs.

My dilation was checked at 2cm and then again when I was put into the birth room.

I complained to HCCC where I felt response and response time was demeaning, the result was an apology and basically we'll bring this up in the next team meeting.