

Submission  
No 1370

## INQUIRY INTO BIRTH TRAUMA

**Name:** Name suppressed

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Partially  
Confidential

My birth trauma commences prior to birth and during my long journey to conception. Over 2 years of struggling to fall pregnant I have seen many a GP who for the vast majority were unsupportive or unwilling to explore my fertility issues further. This includes rejection of full panel blood tests, not believing that the contraceptive pill could have caused my hormonal issues, lack of support during a prior miscarriage (is saying there was nothing to investigate and you have to wait to have four pregnancy losses before any investigation is carried out) GPs are either trapped within a system that they cannot do anything further (GP noting my issues are not applicable to Medicare and I would need to pay additional fees) / or have deep seeded biases / or are not up to date with more recent research / open to other modalities and ways of thinking about women's health. I was always told to just lose weight, (by purchasing diet shakes from Priceline?) feeling shamed for my body (and I am not someone who identifies as being overweight).

The process to conception could have been more smooth sailing if correct specialists were referred early on and my concerns, symptoms heard.

After miscarrying I was supremely happy to have fallen pregnant a few months later in July 2022 via ovulation induction; however experienced almost debilitating anxiety about my unborn sons health throughout my pregnancy this year.

Being a person experiencing antenatal anxiety I was hyper aware of every word every piece of information given to me during my antenatal appointments.

On a number of occasions I was met with junior doctors who were not experienced enough to be dealing with a patient with these needs (or anyone) mentioning the risks of not inducing me due to low platelet counts. Words such as infant death were used and was absolutely terrifying to have that said to me. Making me feel guilty. Making me terrified of having an induction and how painful it could prove to be. Making me feel like I had no option. Making me feel i was under pressure to go into labour (which is not conducive to actually going into spontaneous labour!)

My actual birth ended in an emergency cesarían after an extremely long labour. My birth plan had stated minimal vaginal examinations however as my labour progressed this seemed to go out the window. The amount of time my body was checked - to have fingers inserted in my vagina during a contraction was probably

One of the most painful experiences of my life. I don't really remember been asked as it happened so many times the initial protocols were thrown out the window. This was important to me and stipulated in my birth plan as I had a previous uncomfortable experience during a colposcopy with a student doctor.

I felt helpless and powerless to the fact that my Only apparent option presented was a cesarean I felt like a failure. I was promptly placed in a shared room with another emergency c section patient who spent the night crying because she was separated from her baby for hours and then was having a terrible time feeding. I spent the night on my own, listening to each other cry all night long, terrified our babies were choking on their milk or unable to pick our babies on our own without

assistance, trying to hold out and not press the buzzer for the already in high demand midwives. I couldn't wait to get out of that room.

After my cesarean I was readmitted to hospital with sepsis, a result of my prior hospital stay and most likely contracted during surgery.

I had no idea how common these types of infections are, not only during caesarean births but for many women who have stitches after vaginal tears etc.

It was a terrifying experience as I felt so I'll but I had to battle with hospital staff to convince them that I was unwell. This left me five days post partum again in hospital for another five days feeling absolutely depleted, still recovering from the cesarean and now this blood infection. It terrified me that I could become so sick from having surgery this way. I was not given any explanation as to why this occurred and felt like it pushed back my overall recovery weeks.

I appreciate my story was perhaps not the worst experience that may be shared within these submissions, however I do hold onto this experience as a trauma, the pressure, the helplessness, the never ending recovery from an unwanted surgery, the lack of answers or understanding has all contributed to my ongoing anxiety (now diagnosed post natal anxiety). This comes from someone who was well informed, with the support of a doula, and an amazing partner. I can only imagine for those birthing people who do not have these supports or access to resources go through in similar situations.