

Supplementary
Submission
No 1463a

INQUIRY INTO BIRTH TRAUMA

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My postpartum care was traumatising in the hospital.

After a full day of birthing my baby and everything possibly going wrong I had an emergency Cesar that night. I had been contracting the whole night before alone in the maternity ward and then active labour in the birthing unit from 7am - 7:30pm the following day. I then had my emergency Cesar that night at 7:30 and gave birth to my first born.

I was given a spinal block and was temporarily paralysed from my neck down. It was so strong that the doctors had to lift my arms for me to be able to do skin to skin.

Following the surgery I was taken to the recovery ward for an hour.

During my Cesar I had lost a considerable amount of blood and was told different amounts by different people.

I was taken to the maternity ward that night at 9:30pm, upon arrival the midwife on the ward reminded us of the visiting hours that had already ended, hinting to my partner it was time to leave but she would let him stay a little longer. I was in shock to this as I had just birthed our first baby and I was still numb and unable to move. I was then expected to be left alone with a newborn, without a support person 2hours after a horrific birth.

My support people had to leave and I was alone.

It was a horrible feeling, you're supposed to be happy at this time. You have your newborn baby and everything should be a happy bubble. But I was so exhausted and so numb my body was trying to sleep and I could barely move.

Since my baby was Cesar he had more amniotic fluid in his lungs than a vaginally birthed baby. So he was choking up fluid while he was in his little bassinet by my bedside. It was so scary because he was literally laying on his back face up choking on fluid and I was ringing my buzzer for a nurse and no one came quick enough. So I had to sit up really quickly hours after having being cut open 7 layers deep. It felt like my insides were going to fall out. But I couldn't sit there and watch my newborn drown from his own throw up.

I was also left alone with him on my chest to breastfeed that night.

That was extremely dangerous and I'm not sure why hospitals allow new mums to do this alone after when they have not slept for a day or so and are on such strong opioids.

I fell asleep while breastfeeding him, but luckily woke up and I hadn't rolled over or anything. He had just moved down my chest while I was asleep.

The following day an obstetrician came to my room to do a follow up and recommended an iron transfusion as I had lost alot of blood. He said a different number to what I was told previously and they wrote down a smaller number on my discharge papers which was confusing.

A midwife also came to my room and was asking what pain relief I would like prescribed, I repeatedly said no to endone and she kept trying to push that drug on me. My sister who is a doctor firmly told her I said no and wanted something else. It seemed like she did not have knowledge of what other drug I could have. The hospital staff must just

The second night I stayed in the maternity ward was probably the scariest. I was prescribed palexia, bupranorphine, paracetamol and ibuprofen.

My pain had increased since my spinal block had faded. The issue again was when visiting hours ended and I was supposed to be 'sleeping'. But there is no set time to sleep with a newborn.

My pain killers were so strong (I had even been taking half the recommended dose).

I was so tired this night, I was warned about the fatigue of the second night. But not about the lack of staff/help you need when you're in there.

I was holding my newborn baby exhausted and whenever I closed my eyes I would see flashing lights and random faces appearing. I was high on the drugs I was prescribed.

I buzzed for a nurse to come and take my baby because I knew I wasn't fit too care for him.

They returned my baby two hours later.

That whole night I barely slept and was just counting down the hours until visiting hours were back. I needed my partner (or anyone) to help me. I couldn't physically sit up and pick up my baby. I couldn't even take care of myself, I needed assistance to sit up and get out of bed.

I accidentally dropped my buzzer on the ground. I was stuck, I needed help and I couldn't even buzz for assistance.

I ended up using my mobile to call the hospital, to call the maternity ward and tell them I needed help.

The next morning at 7am I had barely slept and the baby needed caring for. I called my partner to come in to help me because I was exhausted and he arrived at 7:30. Unfortunately visiting hours began at 8 and the staff refused to let him to help me change the baby.

He had to wait outside the maternity ward door until 8am and I had to buzz and ask staff to take my baby cause I was unable to look after him with that much fatigue.

I ended up discharging myself early from hospital late that afternoon because I knew I would not have the help I needed for myself or my baby that night.

The lack of staffing and the poor visiting hours is the reason for this.

I had major surgery and realistically needed to stay there another two nights minimum, but because of lack of care I could not.

The hospital needed more staff, more midwife's and better visiting hours for mums.

A new mum cannot care for a baby by herself after major surgery and on strong opioids. It is barbaric.

The maternity ward had one midwife on shift both nights I stayed. Other staff were registered or enrolled nurses.

Maternity wards need more support and so do the patients.

NSW health needs to reassess care here, it is not meeting the standards of healthcare for 2023. Maternity wards had better care 20 years ago.

I am traumatised from the lack of care I received from the second I left the recovery ward.