

Submission
No 1439

INQUIRY INTO BIRTH TRAUMA

Name: Name suppressed

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Partially
Confidential

I gave birth to my baby early 2022. I wanted a natural birth but was advised to be induced due to a scan estimating baby's size at >97%. I followed medical advice and had a 'stretch and sweep' procedure at 38 weeks gestation. When I asked if that could bring on labour, the doctor laughed and said no, he's never seen that before in his career. However, google said it would increase the chances of inducing labour. The next morning my waters broke and I went to hospital. I had no contractions so thought I would be sent home but when I arrived they said I was Group B streptococcus positive and that would mean I should opt to be induced. The reason for this was otherwise it would risk the infection spreading to my baby. What choice did I have? This swab had been taken approx 3-4weeks earlier but no one ever relayed the results to me or told me the implications of this. This is not good enough. Of course I would never risk my baby's health so opted for induction. I was commenced on an IV drip. The contractions came on slowly and then all at once. I couldn't control my body movements and was shaking uncontrollably. I think my body just went into shock. I was using inhalation gas for pain relief and this did little for the pain but greatly slowed down my cognitive abilities. So when someone spoke to me it felt like it took 5 seconds to sink in and then it took my another 5 seconds to be able to respond. No physical position I got in was comfortable. I told my midwife that I really wanted a water birth but was told to "just get in the shower". After hours and hours I couldn't take the pain anymore and opted for an epidural. I couldn't hold still due to the uncontrollable shaking despite knowing I risked being paralysed by the needle if I didn't. Thank God the anaesthetist got it in okay. Unfortunately the epidural was positional and only worked on the side I was not lying on. This meant half my body was screaming in pain and the other half was numb. I had to adjust sides every 10min. If I lay flat it pooled in my legs and then didn't work in my back/stomach at all. After 24hrs of contractions I was told I had only dilated to 5cm. I elected for a c-section at this point. I was wheeled into theatre 2-3 hrs after this. I was relieved it would nearly be over. During the operation the epidural began to wear off on my left lower abdomen area. I could feel the knife cutting through me and began to cry out telling them I could feel it. They seemed to adjust the epidural but it kept getting worse. It was so hot and painful I couldn't control my crying. I begged them to stop but they sped up, which hurt even more. Eventually they pulled out my baby and I was briefly in awe. A healthy baby boy. Such a wonderful surprise and I'm so eternally grateful. A part from the issues I have highlighted above, I received excellent care from every health professional I came into contact with.

This was difficult for me to write but I feel so strongly about investing more resources, staff and money into healthcare as I am a nurse myself.

I would like to see more invested in midwifery group programs. More free or at least subsidised pre and post natal education for new parents. The courses available at the Hospital are fantastic and should be offered in all hospitals to all families free of charge.

Thank you for taking the time to ready my story.