AIMS For a better birth...

# Letters

AIMS Journal 2007, Vol 19, No 3

## Cascade of Intervention

*I am still in the process of coming to terms with the birth of my daughter last August.*

I had a very easy pregnancy without any problem apart from frequent fainting from the third until the sixth month of my pregnancy, which was never taken seriously by any of the members of the NHS. It ended after a few sessions with an osteopath in France. I should have read into this as being a bad sign for the rest...

But I am a positive person and trustful in my own body and people in general.

I had booked a home birth with the NHS and all was going well until my 37th week of pregnancy when a consultant began telling me that if my pregnancy was overdue I would have to have the birth induced. I got very angry and said that I thought it was extremely daring and threatening to talk to me about induction when I was only 37 weeks into my pregnancy.

From then on, the medical staff became more and more threatening about induction and the fact that I should be careful, my baby was put at risk, my placenta getting weaker, there was meconium in my water... Nobody ever heard me saying that my baby was very active which is a good sign of its health, that I felt great, nobody saw how stressful I found the whole episode. There was a deadline to my pregnancy and I was missing it!

I ended up being booked for the Monday following my due date plus two weeks. These last two weeks were horrible, I tried everything I could to trigger a labour I did not feel ready for and ended up succeeding on the Friday with an acupuncture session. The contractions lasted for 36 hours with one visit to the hospital where I was told all was fine and that I was not in labour but should be soon.

That is also when I discovered two things: there was no midwife on call that weekend so I could not have a home birth if I wanted to and I was not in labour which seemed to be the equivalent to not being in pain in the eyes of the medical staff.

When I came back after 36 hours of contractions, I lost all control over anything. I was given pethidine, put in a ward in the middle of the night where I felt very uncomfortable moaning and waking the other patients in the beds next to mine. My waters broke two hours later and I did not get any assistance from the nurse on reception to whom I apologised for having dribbled my waters all along the corridor on my way to the toilets.

They finally put me in the labour ward where I suffered more contractions until I finally reached two centimetres dilatation (after 46 hours of contractions) and was given an epidural.

After two hours on an epidural, the pain came back and the midwife realised that during the change of shift between her and her predecessor, she forgot to top it up. I was told I would be told off for not reminding them!

The anesthesist was called and gave me two big doses to numb the pain after which I felt my baby move. A midwife who was just passing by checked the heart monitor and said, 'Oh! We have lost the baby's heart beat!' I tried to say that it may be due to the fact that it had moved but nobody heard me and I was taken into theatre for an emergency cesarean section.

I knew before I had my baby that I wanted to avoid the hospital.

I feel my catastrophic scenario was somehow set up by the system. I do not see how in those conditions of fear, uncaring, intimidating and overmedicated system anyone could give birth naturally. I certainly cannot.

I will avoid the NHS at all costs and am beginning to save money to have an independent midwife for my next pregnancy.

I am delighted to have found you exist and will try and support your action as well as I can.

I hope my story can be of some use to you.

*Renee De Luycker*

## Praise for 'Birth Trauma'

*I cannot begin to thank you enough for the last two issues of the AIMS Journal I have read.*

I now know that I suffered PTSD after my first baby and I am sure that it is adding to the difficulty we are having deciding if I should have a second baby. The stories of the two editors were very moving, and it makes me feel that I am quite normal in my feelings over the birth of my child. It was every bit as violent and scary as I remember and I am not overreacting and getting my emotions out of proportion as I have been told.

However, I also read the issue on Birth Centres from cover to cover, what a difference that seems to

make! If only I could have been in a place like Montrose to have my baby I'm sure that the delivery would have been everything I had wanted and every bit as I imagined it would be when I was pregnant.

I feel much more confident about having another baby and we are discussing hiring a private midwife if we can't find anywhere small and friendly to go next time.

Thank you for making me feel normal.

*Amber Jones*