AIMS For a better birth...

A zumba-induced baby

AIMS Journal, 2014, Vol 26, No 2

Virginia Hatton shares her story of being pregnant for 40 weeks and 18 days

Women in my family tend to be pregnant at least 42 weeks, so I always knew my baby would be 'late'. I disagreed with the due date predicted by my three-month scan and thought my actual 'forty-week mark' was about 12 days later. I wrote to the Head of Midwifery to say that I expected to be supported in a homebirth even if I went past 42 weeks. I was told I could only have a homebirth up to 42 weeks. However, thanks to AIMS, I knew it was my right to birth at home and I knew that my baby would come when he was ready.

I declined a 'stretch and sweep' and induction after I was a week 'overdue'. Since I had declined induction I was referred to a consultant, who was surprisingly supportive and said that 20 years ago I wouldn't have been induced, so it was my decision. The hospital offered additional monitoring, which I declined since I didn't believe I was that overdue. I was constantly aware of every kick in the womb, which was more reassuring to me than any scan could be.

When I was 17 days 'overdue', my doula invited me to a zumba class. The instructor danced with me saying, 'Let's get that baby out tonight! Show off your beautiful bump!'

The next morning 18 days 'overdue', I had a bloody show and very mild contractions throughout the day. By 5:30pm the contractions were ever y two to three minutes and we asked our doula to come over. At about 8:30pm, I knew it was time to call the midwives after I had a good cry and threw up. I'd been keeping the pool as my incentive for pain relief and looked forward to getting in. However, once I was in, it didn't feel as good as the TENS machine and I had to check the thermometer to confirm it was actually warm.

When the first midwife arrived our doula asked her to read our birth plan before entering the birth space. I was in the pool for about 45 minutes and then got out after the midwives said our baby's heart beat was getting high. I kneeled facing our couch with husband holding my hands. I was there for about 35 minutes when the midwives announced the head was out. I chose not to have vaginal examinations so I wouldn't know how far (or not far) along I was and to have no directed pushing. I felt no distinction between contractions and pushing, so had pushed him out without even realising it! Our baby was born at 10:25 with his water sac unbroken. The cord was short so the midwife cut it once it stopped pulsating and I was able to bring him up to my breasts and look into those newborn eyes.



My husband and I were in such shock that the labour was over so quickly and the baby was here, that we let our guard down a bit and left things to the midwives. Everything became very rushed as I focused on delivering the placenta, which took about an hour. After the placenta came out, I was examined by the

midwives who said I had a minor tear and we would need to transfer to the hospital to do the stitches. After a physiological birth and third stage it was disappointing to go into the hospital. However, it was better than being stitched up by an anxious midwife who did not want to do stitches at home. Finally around 2:30am we went to sleep in our own bed, looking forward to sharing the long-awaited news when morning came.