

### Kim's story

I carry group B strep so when I noticed on the Saturday that I may be leaking amniotic fluid I called the hospital. I was asked to go in and arrived at about 5pm. They monitored me and then at about 6pm the SHO came round. The woman serving food asked the SHO if I was staying and she said no (this was pre-examination so not her fault really) so I got no food. Of course it turned out that I was leaking fluid and needed to be induced which they booked for the next day. The SHO said wasn't it exciting that I would see my baby the next day to which I replied 'no, I am leaking fluid and not contracting and stuck in here that isn't good'. She agreed to ask the registrar if I could go out for a 'last supper' but the answer was no (I have no idea why I could not have popped home and get something to eat). I was taken to my room and offered sandwiches or hubby could bring something in. I opted for sandwiched as all hubby could bring in was a take away and I had really bad indigestion by then (39 + 4) so greasy food did not appeal.

At 9pm my waters went properly and I started contracting. I was monitored and then Hubby was thrown out and I was told to go to sleep (offered a sleeping pill but I didn't want to drug the baby - ironic when you see what happened)! I had to take my next lot of antibiotics at 12pm so couldn't really go to sleep until after that. I eventually put my tens machine on and drifted into a fitful sleep at 1am on Sunday morning. I was awake again before 3am. I paced around the room alone and got in and out of the bath - I couldn't stay in long as there was no really hot water and shivering in a cold bath isn't fun when in labour. They were meant to take my temp every 4 hours but the midwife didn't, so I don't know why I was made to stay in there. I could have been at home where I may have slept and would have had a warm bath to wallow in.

At 7am I asked them to call hubby and my mum as I had been alone and scared for most of the night. I would never have been in there had I not had GBS - I had intended to go down when I could not possibly stand the pain any longer but labour as much as I could at home. I was also exhausted and had been starved.

At 8am THE midwife (S) came in. I didn't recognise her. She took baby's heartbeat then said she would be back. Hubby and mum then turned up and the midwife came in and took me to the labour ward. She said that she remembered me from ante natal and the way she said it made me think 'oh god what did I say to her'. It turns out that I saw her twice and each time she was rude to me. The first was when I was 13 weeks pregnant and went for my second scan. I had one at 10 weeks because I was high risk and when I had that scan the midwife said that she would book me in for another scan as it was a bit too early to do the nuchal measurement. I think she saw how worried we were and thought that we would appreciate another scan after the 12 weeks watershed. S had asked us why were we there and told us that we had the nuchal scan done at 10 weeks so why did we need one now. She was really off and acted as if we were wasting her time despite us explaining that we hadn't requested the scan. She was then really off with me when doing the scan implying that I was too fat for her to get a good image (I am a little overweight but not obese at all). Hubby explained to her that we didn't think that we would ever have kids as I have infertility issues when I went out of the room to go to the toilet and she calmed down.

The next time I saw S was at 38 weeks. J had been quiet from the Saturday (unknown to me I was coming down with a virus which had caused this). On the Monday by lunchtime a baby that usually gave 60 to 80 kicks a day had given only 1 despite me doing all the tricks to get him going. Maternity had said to come in for monitoring so I did. They sent me to antenatal as they

were busy. She was very off with me. It was only when it was evident from the trace that he wasn't active that she eased off but she did say that normally women come in here saying no movements and you get an active trace! I feel sorry for them. The registrar was concerned enough to scan me so I wasn't wasting their time.

Anyway to the day and as briefly as I can. I was examined and only 1.5cm dilated so was given the option by the registrar to be induced or wait another 24 hours. I agreed to the induction as with GBS you need to get them out quickly (glad I did as they gave me the wrong antibiotic and the one I got would not have worked properly on the GBS). They started me off and I asked to stand. After much fiddling with wires and drips by S, I managed to stand but I started to shake violently. She completely ignored this. I was rigid gripping the bed as I thought that my legs were going to go and she placed the birthing ball on the bed said here lean on that and walked out the room! I had to get hubby to remove the ball so that I could climb back on the bed.

I then asked for gas and air and was told by S no I don't want you on that for that long! She offered pethidine - I wish that I had asked for an epidural at this stage but I still had a vain hope of getting off the bed! I accepted the pethidine which worked for an hour or so.

During this S was trying to get the contractions transducer to work and becoming increasingly frustrated. It was implied again that this was due to my weight (how come they had a perfect trace showing contractions from another machine the night before?). The more frustrated she got the more brutal she was with the transducer. At one stage I was vomiting while she was ramming the transducer up under my ribs repeatedly. God knows what she thought she would do if she did get a trace there as the only way to hold it as firmly as she was forcing it would be with a decent amount of duct tape. She also kept over inflating the blood pressure cuff and would only stop the machine when I screamed (and was taking my blood pressure during contractions so I had her either ramming the transducer into my bump or torturing me with the blood pressure cuff).

I had a replacement midwife who gave me gas and air when S was at lunch (when S returned she refused to change the canisters and Hubby had to do this for the rest of the day). When she got back (2pm) I asked for more pain relief and was given a second dose of pethidine. This was the stage I stopped coping. All it did was make me black out between contractions. At this stage they also stopped me drinking water as I had vomited forcibly and it had gone on the floor. They also stopped the syntocinon as they had hyperstimulated me and I was getting 'three contractions rolled into one' as S put it and as an estimate I would say that they lasted 5min or so hubby says it was more like 10min.

At 4.30pm I asked for an epidural. I was not coping at all with the pain. I was exhausted and in a considerable amount of pain. She said to me that I could not have an epidural. No one would give me one as I had just had pethidine (she did later retract this and said she supposed that it was a while ago but still said that as I had pethidine I could not have an epidural) but she may be able to get me some more pethidine. I thought that she was asking the doctor for this but she wasn't. Each time she came into the room I asked her but she just said that she would have to ask the doctor but did nothing.

At 5.30pm she did a brutal examination to gauge how far gone I was (to assess the pain relief options). J has his first episode of bradycardia and she left the room without saying a thing and

didn't return until the doctor came. No one explained that this may happen nor told me it was ok! The registrar asked about pain relief and I agreed to an epidural. It says this clearly in my notes.

Nothing happened. She didn't get me the epidural (despite the fact that by now Hubby had said to her twice that I was not coping and would stop cooperating soon).

I had started to get involuntary pushes but was so exhausted (and drugged) that I didn't feel them or the urge to push. She told me to push on the next contraction (but didn't actually encourage me to push during the contraction) and I tried but I couldn't feel anything to push against. She went out of the room and said to her pals in front of hubby 'that she just doesn't want to push'(as well as calling the other woman in labour stupid). She then examined me (I wasn't even fully dilated so that would be why I didn't feel the urge to push). I had a second episode of bradycardia after that brutal examination. She again left the room - she did return to sit me up and turn me onto my side but with no explanation as to why or what was going on and then left again. She didn't ask if I was comfortable and the pain was excruciating. The pain went from during contractions to ripping through me (like it does when you have a really big fall - in the moments just after you realise that you are still alive and just before you realise that it is you screaming). I had to beg hubby to move the bed down again as I was in so much pain I couldn't turn to the controls.

Things were slowing down so she asked to restart the syntocinon to which I said no not without pain relief. She only agreed to a third dose of pethidine (which I had asked her about every time she came into the room as I was under the impression that when she said that she would have to ask the doc that she was asking the doc) because I would not let her restart the syntocinon. By this stage I was yelling and crying and could not use the gas and air properly. She was shouting at hubby over me to 'get her to breath it properly she isn't breathing it properly' and shouting at me to use the gas and air properly (it is difficult when you are crying to use it properly). It was about this time that I was told that the other woman in labour who had come in after me would be out before me. I started to scream and I mean scream with all my might. Anyone said anything I screamed, any contraction, I screamed, anyone touched me, I screamed. I only stopped to take air in. I was still refusing the syntocinon because the pethidine had done nothing.

As she was changing shift at 8pm she left us alone for almost an hour. She only came in to tell me on a few occasions to stop screaming and that she couldn't be with me because she was passing me on and doing the pass over. I was relieved that she went as she was generally abrupt with me and certainly could not have cared less about me.

The next midwife (Z) was more caring but still as useless. She called the anaesthetist as by her notes I was demanding an epidural and very distressed. I had to beg the anaesthetist to give me the epidural (I said 'Please don't leave me like this' over and over) because by Z's notes I was fully dilated. The epidural did nothing as they hadn't asked where the pain was so he had (by his admission later in the operating theatre while giving me the spinal block for the c-section) set it too low thinking I was further on then I was. The epidural did however virtually stop the contractions (1 in 5 to 1 in 10). They left me to rest for an hour before restarting the syntocinon. I agreed to this despite still being in pain because I had given up. I thought that no matter what I

did they would kill J. I remember the SHO stroking my hair and asking if I had a rest. To which I threw the gas an air across the room and said no I fucking haven't its not worked nothing is working. Shame as the SHO was the only one who showed me any caring or compassion all day.

J had another 2 episodes of bradycardia where during the worst his heart rate went down to the 50's and 60's and I was given oxygen as well as some decelerations of a more minor nature. I still got no explanation of what was going on except for the registrar saying that he was fine when I asked (but not telling me what had happened). They stopped the syntocinon. The registrar was called and I was asked to continue for another hour with the syntocinon as it transpired that I was not fully dilated (probably because J was a brow presentation and no one had noticed). If I didn't progress I would have a c-section. I refused and asked for the section before they killed us both. J was born 46min later at 12.46am on the Monday morning.