

Knights of Saint Columba

Accrington Council 188

Bulletin No.2- G25

Source Christian Institute

A mother has shared how she refused to have an abortion even though doctors offered it ten times after diagnosing her baby with a disability.

Natalie Halson explained that doctors persistently pressured her to have an abortion because of baby Mirabelle's diagnosis of spina bifida – a condition where the spine does not develop properly.

Spina bifida affects the nervous system and can cause paralysis, but surgery can significantly alleviate the various effects, including with in-womb surgery.

'Quality of life'

Natalie was told over the phone that her baby had the condition. She said doctors "made out like an abortion was my only option and explained that if I went ahead with the pregnancy my baby would be wheelchair bound and have no quality of life.

"When I got off the phone I went and did tonnes of research and found out that there were options for my little girl – I felt suddenly really angry that they'd made out I had none."
"a proper little person"

She said if she'd not done her research she might have even agreed to the abortion.

"I look at Mirabelle now and think 'I wouldn't even have known you.' It doesn't bear thinking about."

'Vile'

Natalie explained: "I refused to give up on my baby but the medics just wouldn't take no for an answer.

"It was so insistent even after I'd repeatedly said no, but it was getting offered a termination just weeks before she was born that really upset me.

She said Mirabelle was "a proper little person", and that it was "vile to think they just wanted me to get rid of her".

She added: "I was offered an abortion at every appointment I had up until the day she was born – about ten times in all. But I am so glad I refused."

Other options

Mirabelle was born in December at 38 weeks in an emergency Caesarean section, and underwent a twelve-hour operation to fix her spine.

She has had a clean bill of health since then, and is developing normally.

Natalie said: "I would recommend to any parents who are advised to abort, that it isn't the only option no matter what the hospitals try and tell them."

In-womb operations

While spina bifida is usually treated with surgery after birth, increasingly doctors have successfully trialled in-womb surgery to treat the condition as early as possible.

In May, doctors treated a child with spina bifida using keyhole surgery, in a UK first, which neurosurgeon Mr Bassel Zebian said helps reduce the risk of complications later in life.

And earlier this year doctors performed a similar in-womb surgery on mum Bethan Simpson.

In the week following her daughter's birth, Bethan reported her baby showed "no signs" of the condition.

Bernard Holden MBE JP

If you do not wish to received these bulletins please let me know by email

<http://ksc188.weebly.com/publications.html>

Please feel free forward to others you feel may be interested in the contents of this bulletin.