

Dear Parliamentary Senate Members,

I came across an article on essential baby (<http://www.essentialbaby.com.au/pregnancy/pregnancy-health/half-of-bereaved-parents-lose-friends-after-having-a-stillborn-baby-20180510-h0zvmi>) encouraging people to make a submission of which I am more than ready to do so.

Our family lost a baby girl (Aashna Rao) at 36 weeks 3 years ago. We already had a baby boy before this baby who was a healthy, normal, no complication baby delivered full term at 40 weeks. Due to this, my second pregnancy was considered absolutely normal with no complication history. Everything was normal with this baby till the fateful date of my doctor's appointment at 36 weeks where we found out the baby had no heartbeat! It came as absolute shocker to the doctor and us! We were not at all prepared for this.

Then came the usual induction, delivery and the funeral of the baby which nobody is prepared of. We were provided good support at the hospital (Northern hospital, Epping, Vic) though which organized clothes, photo shoot and some baby-keepsakes for us to take home.

I had a third baby soon after and because of my history, I was considered high-risk and was provided most care after 30 weeks. It is during this 30<sup>th</sup> week, I was asked to do an ultrasound (which normally is not done after 20 weeks at all) that I was found to have less water level. This made me go through regular water level and movement/heart-beat monitoring till I was given a date to be induced. The doctor did not wait for me to go in labour. I was induced at full term (37 weeks).

Oh why wasn't I told to do even 1 ultrasound after 20 weeks before!

After going through this, I would like to point out these things :

1. Give information about the possibility of a stillbirth at ante-natal classes. Help mothers who are in their 3<sup>rd</sup> trimester to keep track of the kicks and information on how to contact anybody immediately if there is any doubt.
2. Having an ultra sound at 20 weeks and nothing at all afterwards does not help. Just checking the heart beat and some movements does not help. **THERE SHOULD BE AN ULTRASOUND AFTER 30 weeks**. This will detect anything suspicious. This can include heart-beat / movement monitoring once every week. If there is anything which the mother can check at home herself will also be beneficial.

I hope my story has its impact and something is done for future mothers to be given proper care and information. I do not wish any such mother-to-be to go through such trauma and heart break of losing a child. Parents should never bury a child.

Best Regards,

Ashwini Rao