

SPSO decision report



Case: 201002171, Greater Glasgow and Clyde NHS Board
Sector: health
Subject: communication; staff attitude; dignity; confidentiality
Outcome: not upheld, no recommendations

Summary

Mrs C, who has several medical conditions, complained about the care and treatment she received from the Board and about the attitude of Board staff. She said that a consultant behaved aggressively towards her and wrongly said she was unlikely to be lactose-intolerant, and that a nurse was unfriendly and uncooperative when she attended for an injection. She also said that the consultant told her that an appointment had been made for her to have radio iodine treatment at a cancer treatment centre in Glasgow, when this was not the case.

Mrs C said that the medicines she had tried for her thyroid condition made her ill. She said they contained lactose and that there was a possibility that she might be lactose-intolerant. Mrs C visited the consultant with her son. She explained this and said that she could not tolerate the medication. She said that the consultant was aggressive and verbally abusive throughout the consultation. He told her she was not likely to be lactose intolerant. She left the consultation early because of this. The consultant, on the other hand, said that Mrs C was angry from the start of the consultation. He said he explained that he did not think there would be a problem with the medication, and why, but when he did so she became angrier and left the room.

We did not uphold Mrs C's complaints about staff attitude, as there was no independent evidence to substantiate either account of events. Neither did we uphold the complaint that the consultant told Mrs C that she was not lactose intolerant - again there was no independent evidence of what was said. We took advice from one of the Ombudsman's medical advisers who, after seeing Mrs C's medical records, said that the board conducted reasonable clinical investigations into the side effects she reported. They also appropriately discussed normal treatment options with her. He said that there are many different thyroid preparations and it was unlikely that Mrs C would be intolerant to all of them. Therefore, we did not uphold the aspect of Mrs C's complaint that the Board did not adequately consider her lactose intolerance. However, we did note the Adviser's comment that it was possible the consultant might not have explained this to her in detail.

On the subject of the appointment, Mrs C said that nurses told her son that there was no appointment for her in the cancer centre's system. We asked the Board about this. They provided a record sheet showing that an appointment had indeed been

requested. Radio iodine appointments were at set times each week and so cancer centre staff were simply given Mrs C's name to allocate to a particular slot during one of these times. As the appointment was made in this way it did not show up in the general appointment system.