

Case: 201004178, Fife NHS Board
Sector: health
Subject: clinical treatment; diagnosis
Outcome: not upheld, no recommendations

Summary

In August 2009, Ms C had a fall which resulted in an injury to her wrist and foot. She was referred by her GP to the hospital's casualty department where wrist was x-rayed. Ms C was diagnosed with a fractured wrist and a cast was applied. The following day, she attended the hospital's fracture clinic where her x-ray was reviewed by a registrar. The registrar questioned the diagnosis of a fracture and subsequently diagnosed a soft tissue injury. Her cast was removed and replaced with a temporary splint.

Over the next two months, Ms C experienced a great deal of pain and discomfort. She attended the casualty department of the hospital in October 2009 with pain. Her wrist was x-rayed a second time and a fracture was diagnosed. A few days later, Ms C attended the fracture clinic where her splint was replaced and a referral made for physiotherapy. Ms C attended the physiotherapy sessions but as her pain persisted over several months she was referred to a consultant hand surgeon who recommended corrective surgery.

Ms C complained that the failure to diagnose her broken wrist prolonged her suffering and led to a need for surgery. We did not uphold this complaint as we found that the diagnosis and subsequent treatment were reasonable.

Ms C also complained that the board delayed in taking action and that she had to wait too long for surgery. We did not uphold this complaint and found that the waiting time Ms C experienced was considered according to the nature of her injury and was within the NHS target for that type of operation.