

## SPSO decision report

**Case:** 201103954, Greater Glasgow and Clyde NHS Board - Acute Services Division  
**Sector:** health  
**Subject:** clinical treatment / diagnosis  
**Outcome:** not upheld, no recommendations

### Summary

Mr C had chronic pain in his back and leg which had previously been relieved by epidural injections (injections into the spine to relieve pain or inflammation). In May 2011, he was referred for a further injection. He said that during the procedure the consultant anaesthetist hit bone and a nerve in his back, and had attempted to place the injection several times before placing it 'anywhere he could'. Mr C said that the pain in his back had been intense, and that he now had a permanent numb leg with loss of muscle tone, caused by the inadequate administration of the injection. He felt the procedure had caused him irreparable nerve damage, and he had gone on to have a second opinion and investigatory tests in relation to this from another board area.

After taking advice from our medical adviser, we decided that we could not definitively conclude that Mr C's symptoms were a result of the procedure being performed inadequately. We found that in this type of procedure it was not unusual for several attempts to be made to site a needle, and that bones in the spine could in fact be used as a landmark to help place the injection accurately. We also found that nerve damage was a rare but recognised complication. We did not uphold the complaint but noted that the consent documentation did not record that nerve damage was discussed with Mr C as a potential complication. Although Mr C had not raised this as a specific complaint, we drew it to the board's attention.