

Case: 201102660, A Medical Practice, Fife NHS Board
Sector: health
Subject: clinical treatment; diagnosis
Outcome: not upheld, no recommendations

Summary

Mrs C's late husband (Mr C) was a cancer sufferer. She complained that his practice failed to prescribe him antibiotics when blood test results suggested he had an infection and also that they failed to contact him when repeat blood tests were returned early and before he was scheduled to return to the practice. She also complained that the GP(s) failed to spot the seriousness of his condition.

Mrs C had to call an ambulance for her husband five days after his blood tests suggested an infection. He was taken to Ninewells Hospital where he died shortly afterwards of cardiac arrest and sepsis. Mrs C was told that her late husband's body had been overwhelmed by the infection and she felt that this caused or contributed to her husband's cardiac arrest.

We took advice from a medical adviser, who said that the actions of the GPs had been reasonable. He concluded that the GPs had taken full recognition of Mr C's condition and medical history. He also said that as the first blood test results were not conclusive, it had been appropriate to repeat them. The results from the second tests were also not conclusive and in some areas had actually improved. Our adviser took the view that it was, therefore, reasonable for the GPs to wait for the scheduled appointment to review Mr C. He also concluded that the infection which overwhelmed Mr C, although showing early but non-specific signs in the blood tests taken by the GPs, could not have been predicted from the results available to them at the time.

We did not uphold this complaint.