

Case: 201103896, A Medical Practice in the Fife NHS Board area
Sector: health
Subject: communication, staff attitude, dignity, confidentiality
Outcome: some upheld, recommendations

Summary

Mrs C visited a hospital accident and emergency department, where she was diagnosed as having suffered an allergic reaction. Medical staff advised her to visit her GP the next day. When she did so, she was dissatisfied with the care and treatment she received and the attitude displayed towards her.

She made a number of complaints about the GP, including that he questioned the diagnosis she had received (because the doctor who had seen her was a junior doctor); refused to look at the rash on her neck or to prescribe the anti-histamines that she said she had been advised to ask for; pulled her prescription away when she tried to take it from him and laughed at her, and referred to headaches she had been suffering as 'supposed headaches.'

The GP whom Mrs C had complained about responded to her. He apologised that she had been caused upset and distress by the consultation. He explained that he had referred to 'the headaches the neurologist is calling chronic migraine'. He also said that he understood Mrs C had been given advice by a junior doctor, but that he was not bound to agree with that advice. He apologised if his communication of this had caused upset. Mrs C was not satisfied with this response and raised her complaints with us.

The accounts of what happened at the consultation differ considerably and there were no independent witnesses to what happened. We found no evidence that could help us reach a conclusion on Mrs C's complaint about the care and treatment she had received, so we did not uphold that complaint. We did, however, uphold her complaint about the response she received from the practice, as we found evidence that they had considered matters that Mrs C had complained about but had not addressed these in their response to her.

Recommendations

We recommended that the practice:

- apologise to Mrs C that they did not reasonably respond to all the issues she raised in her complaint to them; and
- take steps to ensure that all issues raised in complaints are reasonably addressed in their written responses to complaints.