

## SPSO decision report

**Case:** 201200357, A Medical Practice in the Highland NHS Board area  
**Sector:** health  
**Subject:** clinical treatment / diagnosis  
**Outcome:** not upheld, no recommendations

### Summary

Mr C complained about the care and treatment that his late wife (Mrs A) received from her medical practice from early 2010 when she went there complaining of irregular bleeding. He said that it was not until mid-2011 that a diagnosis of endometrial cancer (cancer in the lining of the womb) was confirmed. He said that his late wife's care and treatment had been inadequate and that the relevant guidelines were not followed.

In investigating Mr C's complaint we carefully considered all the relevant information, including the practice's complaint's file and Mrs A's clinical notes. We also obtained independent advice from our medical adviser. The adviser said that this type of illness usually presented after the menopause and was usually benign (not cancerous). However, Mrs A's case was unusual as it did not fit this pattern and the symptoms of irregular bleeding with which Mrs A presented appeared to indicate that she was starting the menopause. The adviser said that in the circumstances this was not an unreasonable view to take, and that throughout 2010 and early 2011, investigations appeared to bear this out. It was not until after Mrs A had reported that her symptoms were ongoing and was referred to a gynaecologist, that tests confirmed, in June 2011, that Mrs A had endometrial cancer. Her condition deteriorated rapidly and she died in October 2011.

Having taken this advice, we found that Mrs A's care and treatment had been good, and well within the limits of acceptability. We also found that there had been no delays on the part of the practice and they had followed all relevant national guidance.