

SPSO decision report

Case: 201201552, A Medical Practice in the Dumfries and Galloway 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 C) received at the medical practice over a three month period. Mr C was unhappy that the practice did not carry out relevant investigations of Mrs C's persistent and severe abdominal pain. He told us that he felt that doctors at the practice did not listen to their concerns, and that there was a lack of support. After Mrs C was admitted to hospital, further investigations showed that she had pancreatic cancer, and Mrs C died a few weeks later.

We did not, however, uphold Mr C's complaint. Our investigation found clear evidence to show that the practice had carried out appropriate and reasonable investigations to try to diagnose the cause of Mrs C's ongoing pain. They had also referred Mrs C to a specialist for further investigation. We noted that a CT scan (a special scan using a computer to produce an image of the body) had been carried out two months before her diagnosis, but had not shown any abnormalities. Our independent medical adviser also explained that pancreatic cancer tends to present late, often with non-specific symptoms, and has some of the lowest survival rates of all cancers.