

SPSO decision report

Case: 201201690, Grampian NHS Board

Sector: health

Subject: clinical treatment / diagnosis

Outcome: not upheld, no recommendations

Summary

Ms C is an advocate for the sister of the late Mr A. Ms C complained that the care and treatment provided by the board to Mr A was unreasonable. About 15 months after being diagnosed with cancer, Mr A was given the all-clear. However, within two months, his symptoms had returned. Tests at first suggested that the original cancer had come back, but following a liver biopsy (where a sample of tissue is taken for examination in the laboratory), he was told that he had a second type of cancer, incurable small cell lung cancer, which had already spread to his liver. Mr A died some three weeks later.

Our investigation, which included taking independent advice from two medical advisers, a consultant haematologist (a specialist in disorders of the blood) and a consultant oncologist (cancer specialist), found that once Mr A had been referred to the board, the investigation of his condition and his care and treatment were reasonable.

Mr A had a rare form of cancer - Mantle Cell Lymphoma (MCL - cancer of the white cells that help the body fight infection). Mr A was treated for MCL by both the board's specialist team and by another NHS board in his home area. The advisers reviewed Mr A's treatment against guidelines issued by the British Committee for Standards in Haematology which were published in 2012. Although this guidance was provided after Mr A's treatment, the advisers said that his treatment complied with these standards and was, therefore, reasonable. They also considered that overall the care and treatment provided by the board was reasonable and timely.