

SPSO decision report

Case: 201201957, Greater Glasgow and Clyde NHS Board - Acute Services Division

Sector: health

Subject: clinical treatment / diagnosis

Outcome: not upheld, recommendations

Summary

A company acting on behalf of Ms A complained about the management of her throat condition in hospital. They said that, during a tonsillectomy (surgery to remove the tonsils), the uvula (the tissue suspended from the soft palate) at the back of her throat had been removed. Ms A said that the quality of her voice had since changed and that she had difficulty swallowing. In response to the complaint, the board said that they had not removed the uvula but that atrophy (wasting away) of the uvula, while unusual, was a recognised complication of this operation.

Our investigation took account of all the available information, including all the complaints papers and Ms A's relevant medical notes. We also obtained independent advice from a consultant ENT (ear, nose and throat) surgeon, who considered the notes about Ms A's operation. The adviser was satisfied that both the operation and the aftercare given to Ms A were satisfactory. He said that in his view the uvula had not been removed but that rather Ms A's tonsillectomy had led to some scarring of her soft palate. He said that it was likely that this caused the soft palate to tighten, and led to Ms A's concern that her uvula had been removed and to the changes in her voice.

Recommendations

We recommended that the board:

- contact Ms A further in relation to addressing any continuing symptoms.