

SPSO decision report

Case: 201203106, A Medical Practice in the Lanarkshire NHS Board area
Sector: health
Subject: clinical treatment / diagnosis
Outcome: not upheld, no recommendations

Summary

Mrs C's late mother (Mrs A) was prescribed methotrexate (a disease-modifying anti-rheumatic drug) from October 2008 for rheumatoid arthritis. She was monitored on a four-weekly basis, her GP practice took blood tests and she was seen regularly by the rheumatoid clinic at the hospital. In April 2012, however, Mrs A was admitted to hospital where she was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer. She died the following month.

Mrs C complained that her mother should have been taken off the medication because her immune system started to deteriorate and because she had a sore stomach around mid-2011. She also complained that the practice failed to reasonably treat her mother's stomach pain, which Mrs C believed was an indicator that her mother had pancreatic cancer. Finally, Mrs C said that in October 2011 a blood test was carried out showing high levels of inflammation, which she believed indicated cancer, but the practice then failed to carry out any further tests.

After taking independent advice from one of our medical advisers, we found that the practice had properly monitored Mrs A while she was prescribed methotrexate. Moreover, there were no specific entries in Mrs A's medical records in 2011 showing that she attended the practice complaining of a sore stomach. We were, therefore, satisfied that there was no evidence that the care and treatment Mrs A received fell below a reasonable standard.