

SPSO decision report

Case: 201204850, A Medical Practice in the Tayside NHS Board area

Sector: health

Subject: clinical treatment / diagnosis

Outcome: not upheld, no recommendations

Summary

Ms C complained about the care and treatment that her father (Mr A) received from the medical practice during the weeks leading up to his admission to hospital with a chest infection and kidney failure. Mr A saw doctors from the practice several times in the four weeks before he was admitted. Ms C was concerned that an earlier diagnosis of chest infection could have improved his care at home, and reduced the need for hospital intervention. Mr A died three days after he was admitted to hospital.

Mr A had seen doctors from the practice five times - in relation to fluid on his lungs, an ongoing urine infection and unsteadiness with walking. In addition, he saw a physiotherapist twice, had a chest x-ray and a chest scan. The final consultation was during a home visit, when signs of a chest infection were apparent. At first, the GP had assessed that Mr A could stay at home, and take antibiotics. However, when blood tests showed that his kidney function was poor, she decided that he needed admission to hospital for closer monitoring.

We obtained independent advice on this complaint from one of our medical advisers, but did not uphold the complaint. The advice indicated that the chest infection was not apparent until the day Mr A was admitted to hospital, and was not evident on the chest scan. Our adviser considered that the care and treatment provided by the practice were of a good standard and that there was no delay in diagnosing the chest infection. We also found that the practice had acted promptly to secure Mr A's admission to hospital when the infection was identified.