

SPSO decision report

Case: 201205097, Tayside NHS Board
Sector: health
Subject: clinical treatment / diagnosis
Outcome: not upheld, no recommendations

Summary

Miss C complained that out-of-hours hospital staff did not take account of her recent bowel surgery in providing diagnosis and treatment when she attended there because she had not opened her bowels for several days. Miss C said that as a result of this, she developed peritonitis (inflammation of the tissue lining the abdomen) and had to undergo further surgery, including having a colostomy bag.

After taking independent advice from one of our medical advisers, we found that the assessment carried out by the out-of-hours service was appropriate and there were no signs of peritonitis at this time. The records showed that the nurse who dealt with Miss C carried out appropriate examinations, and sought advice from medical staff when giving medication. We could not say for certain what the nurse said to Miss C, but there was evidence to suggest that Miss C was given the opportunity to be admitted to hospital (although we noted that she did not consider that she was in any position to make this decision at the time). We concluded after seeing the medical records that Miss C developed clear signs of peritonitis after she was admitted the following day to a different hospital, but that these symptoms had not been apparent when she attended the out-of-hours service.