

SPSO decision report

Case: 201300493, Ayrshire and Arran NHS Board

Sector: health

Subject: clinical treatment / diagnosis

Outcome: not upheld, no recommendations

Summary

Mrs C complained that, after a day surgery gynaecological procedure, she developed a prolapsed bladder (when the bladder bulges or protrudes onto the front wall of the vagina). She was examined by a gynaecologist who said that the prolapse was mild. She later saw another gynaecologist privately, who said that the prolapse was more significant. Mrs C said that this was an unexpected complication and had happened because the surgeon used excessive force. As a result, she said that she is now more susceptible to infections. She also said that staff knew something had gone wrong during the procedure and that they had concerns about her general health. Mrs C explained that this has been a significant, life-changing event for her, and has had an adverse impact on her quality of life. Mrs C also complained about the board's complaints handling saying they trivialised her complaint and there were inaccuracies, and that the involvement of the gynaecologist in the complaints process was of concern.

As part of our investigation of Mrs C's complaint, we took independent advice from one of our medical advisers. Their advice, which we accepted, was that there was no evidence to link Mrs C's bladder prolapse with the procedure. We also accepted the medical adviser's comments that there was no evidence showing that the surgeon failed to carry out the procedure to a reasonable standard. Although we appreciated that Mrs C had been deeply affected by her experience, we found that post-operative interventions were reasonable and in line with standard practice, and we were satisfied that there was no evidence showing that staff expected Mrs C to experience more than the usual amount of pain from the procedure. Furthermore, we noted the adviser's comments that there was no evidence in Mrs C's records of any concern about her general health condition. In terms of the way the board dealt with the complaint, we were satisfied that they treated it seriously and that any discrepancies about the severity of the prolapse in their responses were not evidence of complaints mishandling. Nor was there any evidence the investigation was compromised by the gynaecologist's role.