

SPSO decision report

Case: 201301507, A Medical Practice in the Grampian NHS Board area

Sector: health

Subject: clinical treatment / diagnosis

Outcome: not upheld, no recommendations

Summary

Mr C said that he had suffered from repeated bouts of sinusitis (inflammation of the lining of the sinuses, causing facial pain) since he was a teenager. He said that he had tried a variety of different treatments, but the only one that had consistently worked for him was a short course of antibiotics.

Mr C complained that when he contacted his medical practice suffering from sinusitis, he was not initially given an appointment but told to contact his pharmacist. He then called NHS 24 and was referred back to the practice, where he was given an appointment that day. Mr C was unhappy that when he went there he was seen by the practice nurse, rather than a doctor. The nurse did not accept that Mr C needed antibiotics, and refused to prescribe them. Mr C said that he was forced to return to his previous medical practice to get them. He said that the practice nurse refused to allow him to see a doctor and inaccurately recorded his symptoms to support her diagnosis.

We took independent advice on this complaint from one of our medical advisers, a specialist in general practice medicine. He said that Mr C had symptoms that corresponded with acute sinusitis, but that current guidance was not to prescribe antibiotics for this condition, as research suggested they were ineffective. He also said that it was standard practice in busy surgeries for patients to be seen initially by a practice nurse. He found no evidence of the notes being altered, or of Mr C having asked to see a doctor. Having taken this advice into account, we did not uphold Mr C's complaint.