

SPSO decision report

Case: 201302041, Dumfries and Galloway NHS Board

Sector: health

Subject: clinical treatment / diagnosis

Outcome: not upheld, recommendations

Summary

Mrs C complained about the care and treatment she received at Galloway Community Hospital for her injured wrist. She said that the locum consultant orthopaedic surgeon who dealt with her did not provide a proper diagnosis, treatment and advice when he saw her at the hospital trauma clinic. She said he only looked at one of four x-rays taken in A&E before telling her that her wrist was not fractured. She said that it was fractured and that the consultant's actions compromised her recovery.

We took independent medical advice on this case from a consultant in trauma and orthopaedics. Our adviser said that the x-rays indicated that Mrs C had fractured her wrist and that the consultant failed to identify this when he saw her at the trauma clinic. His notes and his comments on Mrs C's complaint indicated, however, that he reviewed Mrs C's x-rays. Without independent evidence, it was not possible for us to say whether he failed to examine all four x-rays and this was why he did not correctly identify the fracture. Our adviser explained, however, that in spite of the incorrect diagnosis, Mrs C received the correct treatment for her condition and her recovery was not compromised. We concluded that, on balance, the care and treatment she received was reasonable, although we made recommendations about the incorrect diagnosis.

Recommendations

We recommended that the board:

- feed back the adviser's comments on the consultant's review of Mrs C's x-rays to the consultant, to try to ensure that a similar situation does not occur in future; and
- provide Mrs C with a written apology for failing to provide her with the correct diagnosis.