

SPSO decision report

Case: 201302200, Lanarkshire NHS Board
Sector: health
Subject: clinical treatment / diagnosis
Outcome: not upheld, no recommendations

Summary

Mr A was admitted to Monklands Hospital with abdominal pain and vomiting. He had a hernia operation, then suffered a heart attack a week later. Despite a range of treatment, he died due to the severity of the blockages in his arteries. Ms C, who is an independent advocate, then complained on behalf of Mr A's wife (Mrs A) that the board did not investigate Mr A's underlying heart condition during his many hospital admissions over the previous 18 months. Mrs A was concerned that her husband was at high risk of developing heart disease, but only had one appointment with a cardiologist.

In their response to the complaint, the board said that Mr A had been receiving treatment to control his risk factors, including advice about smoking, and medication prescribed to reduce the likelihood of a blood clot developing, and to lower his blood pressure and cholesterol. They said that during his previous admissions to hospital there was no indication that Mr A had a specific problem with his heart. His shortness of breath was thought to be related to his underlying lung disease, and his indigestion to a history of stomach ulcers.

We took independent advice on this case from one of our medical advisers, who is a cardiologist (a heart specialist). The adviser said that Mr A had a severe respiratory (breathing) disorder and that tests carried out on his heart did not show any problems that required him to be kept under regular review by a cardiologist. During the admissions to hospital, his heart was examined but no significant abnormalities were identified other than a fast heart rate which could reasonably be attributed to his respiratory problems. We did not uphold the complaint.