

SPSO decision report

Case: 201304165, Greater Glasgow and Clyde NHS Board
Sector: health
Subject: clinical treatment / diagnosis
Outcome: not upheld, no recommendations

Summary

As part of a research project, Mrs C had a knee replacement at Glasgow Royal Infirmary. The operation, which was robot-assisted, replaced only the part of her knee which was damaged. As this type of surgery is carried out on a smaller area than traditional knee replacement operations, recovery should be faster. However, after the surgery, Mrs C complained about the care and treatment she received. She questioned whether she had been fit for discharge and about the number of cancelled clinic appointments after the operation. She said that nerve endings were damaged during the operation, which had hindered her recovery. She also told us that she was in pain and had to give up her job.

During our investigation, we obtained independent advice from a medical adviser, who is a consultant in orthopaedic and trauma surgery. We also considered all the available documentation and Mrs C's relevant medical records. Having done so, we did not uphold Mrs C's complaint.

Our adviser said that the operation was carried out appropriately and the knee implant was well positioned. Before the operation, appropriate investigations were made, and appropriate information and consent were given. Later, Mrs C was properly assessed before she was discharged from hospital. The adviser said, however, that there is a known outcome of this operation for some patients, who will be left with worse pain than before. Mrs C fell into this category, and despite things going well, she was one of a small number of patients left with residual pain. While it was noted that two of Mrs C's follow-up appointments were cancelled, another was arranged and we found no evidence that this delay affected the outcome of her treatment.