

SPSO decision report

Case: 201304264, Lanarkshire NHS Board

Sector: health

Subject: clinical treatment / diagnosis

Outcome: not upheld, no recommendations

Summary

Mrs C had a caesarean section (an operation to deliver a baby, which involves cutting the front of the abdomen and womb) in Wishaw General Hospital when her baby was born. The wound subsequently became infected, and Mrs C complained about the way it had been closed. She said that her health visitor told her that the hospital had used double the amount of staples that should have been used, and that they were put in too tightly. After taking independent advice from one of our medical advisers, we found that the procedure was carried out by someone with appropriate skills and experience. The number of staples used was within the range of acceptable practice and the advice we were given is that it is not within the surgeon's control to apply the staples more or less tightly. However, they can become tighter if, as in Mrs C's case, the wound becomes infected. We found that the way the wound was closed was reasonable.

Mrs C also complained that the wound was not reasonably treated during her time in hospital. Although it had become infected, this is a common complication of caesarean section and we found that appropriate measures had been taken to reduce the risk of infection. The wound care provided was reasonable and appropriate and was in line with the hospital's guidance.