

SPSO decision report

Case: 201403274, A Medical Practice in the Highland NHS Board area
Sector: health
Subject: clinical treatment / diagnosis
Outcome: not upheld, no recommendations

Summary

Mrs C complained about the care her late daughter (Miss C) received from her former GP practice between January and August 2011 after Miss C was diagnosed with a brain tumour in July 2012. Mrs C was concerned that Miss C was misdiagnosed with depression and, given that her symptoms (headaches, dizziness, tiredness and dilating pupils) were getting progressively worse, she should have been referred for a brain scan. Mrs C also provided evidence to show that Miss C had been unwell at college and had attended another medical facility.

We took independent advice from one of our medical advisers who is a GP. Based on their advice, we found that the initial diagnosis of vertigo was reasonable based on the symptoms of dizziness and abnormal eye movements. It was also noted that Miss C had described symptoms of anxiety which were explored by the practice, and the reasons for this were plausible. We did not find evidence in any of the records made of the eleven GP consultations, the records made by the college, or medical facility, that Miss C had reported suffering from headaches or that her condition was getting progressively worse. We found that Miss C's symptoms were not consistent with the symptoms of brain tumour set out in the relevant Scottish guidelines for referring patients for urgent assessment (such as for a brain scan). We concluded that this was a tragic case where Miss C's symptoms were not clearly typical of a brain tumour.