

## SPSO decision report

**Case:** 201404693, A Practice in the Ayrshire and Arran NHS Board area  
**Sector:** health  
**Subject:** clinical treatment / diagnosis  
**Outcome:** not upheld, no recommendations

### Summary

Mrs C complained about the standard of treatment her father (Mr A) received from the practice in the final months of his life. Mr A had been diagnosed with bladder cancer in 2012 and had received radiotherapy treatment for this. He remained under the care of a urologist (doctor who specialises in disorders of the urinary tract) and his cancer remained under control until January 2013. At that point, Mr A's condition deteriorated, and he experienced weight loss and significant pain. At a follow-up urology appointment in August 2013, he was found to have developed untreatable cancer that had spread to his bones and spine. He was admitted to a hospice for palliative care (care provided solely to prevent or relieve suffering) shortly afterwards.

Mrs C complained that her father's blood sugar levels were not adequately monitored, and that his pain was not managed effectively by the GPs at the practice between early 2013 and September 2013.

We obtained independent advice from one of our medical advisers. We accepted their view that the practice had managed Mr A's pain in line with national guidance for the control of pain in adults with cancer. We acknowledged that Mr A had experienced significant pain which would have been distressing for him and his family. However, we recognised that pain management in cancer patients can be complex, and it is not always possible to achieve immediate or complete pain relief.

We were also satisfied that Mr A was referred for appropriate specialist investigation and that the practice referred him to the hospice appropriately.