

SPSO decision report

Case: 201406209, A Medical Practice in the Greater Glasgow and Clyde NHS Board area
Sector: health
Subject: clinical treatment / diagnosis
Outcome: not upheld, no recommendations

Summary

Ms C had been referred to a hospital specialist by the practice as she had reported having blood in her sputum (spit). She was told that she had developed terminal cancer. Ms C complained to the practice that she had reported the same symptoms to them for a number of years and that they had only prescribed antibiotics for a burst blood vessel in her throat.

We took independent advice from a GP adviser and found that Ms C had a long history of chronic blood streaked throughout her sputum and that it had previously been investigated by specialists. The presumed diagnosis was inflammation of Ms C's pharynx (back of throat) aggravated by a chronic cough. The plan was that further investigations were not required unless there was a significant change in her symptoms or that new symptoms had developed. When a GP arranged a further x-ray for a possible diagnosis of lower respiratory infection, it was noted that Ms C had a lesion in her chest which was not present in a previous x-ray. This resulted in a further referral for specialist investigations and it was then discovered that Ms C had a lung tumour. There was no evidence to suggest that there had been a previous significant change in Ms C's symptoms which the practice had not taken action on and, when it became clear that the situation had altered, timely and appropriate action was taken in order to reach a definitive diagnosis. We did not uphold the complaint.