

SPSO decision report

Case: 201500545, Ayrshire and Arran NHS Board

Sector: health

Subject: clinical treatment / diagnosis

Outcome: not upheld, no recommendations

Summary

Mrs C complained on behalf of her husband (Mr C). She said that after he was referred to hospital for knee problems, the board failed to provide Mr C with appropriate treatment. She said that it must have been obvious following the results of an x-ray, taken a few months later, that an arthroscopy (a minimally-invasive surgical procedure to examine, and sometimes treat, joint damage) would not solve Mr C's problems, and that he required a total knee replacement. Nevertheless, an arthroscopy was carried out. Mrs C said that her husband continued to experience unacceptable levels of pain and was told to return to his GP to be referred back to hospital. It was later decided that he required a total knee replacement. Mrs C said that it was unreasonable to require her husband to go back to the bottom of the waiting list.

We took independent advice from a consultant in orthopaedic and trauma surgery and found that, at the time of Mr C's x-ray, his knee did not require replacement. In the circumstances, it was reasonable to first undertake the alternative, conservative treatment of an arthroscopy, even though a successful outcome was not guaranteed (and this was explained to him). Some time later, after his knee was shown to have deteriorated, his GP referred him back to hospital for consideration. At that point, Mr C was recommended to have a total knee replacement and, in accordance with policy and practice, he was required to join a waiting list for his operation. In these circumstances, the complaint was not upheld.