

**Case:** 201501220, A Medical Practice in the Greater Glasgow and Clyde NHS Board area  
**Sector:** health  
**Subject:** clinical treatment / diagnosis  
**Outcome:** upheld, recommendations

### Summary

Ms C attended an appointment at her GP practice with a three-week history of constipation, vaginal bleeding and abdominal pain. Ms C was asked by her GP if she could be pregnant and Ms C said she was not. Ms C carried out a pregnancy test that same evening, and it showed that she was in the early stages of pregnancy.

Ms C subsequently had three phone consultations with the practice over the following days. Ms C was advised to contact the Early Pregnancy Assessment Service who informed her that, given her symptoms, she may be having a miscarriage. An appointment was made for her to have a scan the following week. When Ms C attended her appointment, the scan revealed she had an ectopic pregnancy and required emergency surgery.

Ms C was unhappy with the care and treatment she received at the practice. She complained about the attitude of one of the doctors who she felt did not listen to her and treat her with sensitivity. Ms C also said that she was not prescribed antibiotics for a urinary tract infection until she insisted and she was not offered an examination even though she was pregnant.

We took independent advice from a GP. They considered that the care and treatment provided to Ms C at her appointment and during the first phone consultation was appropriate and reasonable. In relation to the second phone consultation which involved the doctor Ms C was unhappy with, there were different versions of what had occurred which we were unable to reconcile. The advice we received was that based on the information provided in the medical records, the doctor's actions in relation to Ms C's clinical treatment were reasonable. However, it appeared that the doctor had not meaningfully engaged with Ms C. We also found that during the third phone consultation with another doctor, that doctor had failed to take into account the relevant guidance on the management of bacterial urinary tract infections in pregnant women and had failed to follow appropriate prescribing guidance. We upheld Ms C's complaint.

### Recommendations

We recommended that the practice:

- apologise to Ms C for the failings identified;
- feed back our findings to relevant staff for reflection and learning; conduct a significant event meeting to discuss all aspects of this case; and submit a further significant event analysis for review to this office to include their reflection on communication and prescribing; ensures that the first doctor reflects on his consultation skills and discuss this complaint and, in particular his communication skills, as part of his annual appraisal; and
- ensures that the second doctor reviews the relevant prescribing guidance for the management of urinary tract infection in pregnancy and identifies this as a learning need as part of his annual appraisal.