

## SPSO decision report

**Case:** 201501914, Lanarkshire NHS Board  
**Sector:** health  
**Subject:** clinical treatment / diagnosis  
**Outcome:** not upheld, no recommendations

### Summary

Mr C was admitted to Hairmyres Hospital with symptoms suggestive of vasculitis (inflammation of a blood vessel or vessels). He was prescribed steroids and discharged. He was seen again at a clinic, at which point it was understood that he would be reviewed by a respiratory team three weeks later. A plan was put in place to reduce his steroid dose over this three-week period.

An appointment was also made for a follow-up appointment with his consultant two months later, by which time it was assumed he would have been seen by the respiratory team. However, when he attended he had still not been seen by them, and had remained on steroids. Mr C was re-referred urgently, and an appointment was made. Following this appointment it was advised that the steroids would be cut down, with a view to stopping them altogether.

Mr C subsequently contracted avascular necrosis (AVN - death of bone tissue due to a lack of blood supply) in both hips, which meant he required a total replacement of his right hip. He believed this was caused by his prolonged steroid use.

We took independent advice from a medical adviser who told us that Mr C's steroids were prescribed appropriately and were used for a relatively short period. There was no evidence to suggest that the steroids would have contributed to his AVN and we were satisfied that his dosage was gradually reduced appropriately. Therefore, we did not uphold Mr C's complaint.