

SPSO decision report

Case: 201504055, A Medical Practice in the Grampian NHS Board area
Sector: health
Subject: clinical treatment / diagnosis
Outcome: not upheld, recommendations

Summary

Mr C complained about the care and treatment provided by the practice. Mr C had attended the practice over the course of approximately three months with symptoms including weight loss, diarrhoea and vomiting. He was ultimately diagnosed at A&E with an intussusception of his small bowel (a condition in which a part of the intestine folds into another section of the intestine). Mr C raised concerns about the time taken to diagnose his condition, including whether appropriate investigations (including a CT scan, which uses x-rays and a computer to create detailed images of the inside of the body) were arranged. He also raised concerns that a GP had identified he had signs of an intussusception but did not appropriately treat this as an emergency.

The practice said Mr C's symptoms were fully and appropriately investigated. They observed that Mr C was referred for specialist investigation at an early stage which provided an alternative explanation for his symptoms. They also said intussusception is a very rare condition in adults. The practice said the medical records did not indicate the GP had diagnosed an intussusception.

After receiving independent advice from a GP, we did not uphold Mr C's complaint. The adviser agreed that there were complicating factors in the diagnosis. The adviser considered that the investigations arranged were appropriate in the circumstances, and found no evidence that a GP had diagnosed an intussusception prior to Mr C's admission to A&E. While we found Mr C's care and treatment was reasonable in the circumstances, we recommended that the practice use this case to consider and share any learning on the presentation and causes of intussusception in adults.

Recommendations

We recommended that the practice:

- use this case to consider and share any learning on the presentation and causes of intussusception in adults.