

SPSO decision report

Case: 201507654, Lanarkshire NHS Board
Sector: health
Subject: clinical treatment / diagnosis
Outcome: upheld, no recommendations

Summary

Miss C complained to us about the failure of a GP at the out-of-hours service at Wishaw General Hospital to provide her with appropriate treatment when she attended with symptoms of severe abdominal pain. Miss C explained that she had told the GP that she had also fainted and that she had had a contraceptive coil removed five days previously. The GP felt that Miss C had either an ovarian cyst or menstrual pain and gave Miss C an anti-sickness injection and told Miss C to go home and see her own GP in the morning. Miss C's pain became unbearable and she re-attended the hospital and was admitted with a diagnosis of an ectopic pregnancy (when the egg implants itself outside the womb). Miss C believed that the GP was wrong to have discharged her home earlier.

We took independent advice from a GP adviser and concluded that although the GP had carried out an appropriate examination, they should have carried out a pregnancy test when Miss C first attended the hospital. We felt that it was unreasonable for the GP to have assumed that Miss C could not have been pregnant because she had only recently had the contraceptive coil removed. We noted that the GP had subsequently realised that they should have carried out a pregnancy test and that they would ensure that they would, in future, carry out a pregnancy test in women of child bearing age who presented with similar symptoms. We upheld Miss C's complaint. However, we did not make any recommendations as the board had already apologised for the failure to perform the pregnancy test and the GP had conducted a significant event analysis of this case.