

SPSO decision report

Case: 201507861, Ayrshire and Arran NHS Board
Sector: health
Subject: clinical treatment / diagnosis
Outcome: some upheld, recommendations

Summary

Mr C complained that the board had failed to provide compression stockings for his varicose vein surgery at University Hospital Ayr. Mr C said he was unusually large and already received custom-made support stockings from the hospital. On the day of his surgery, however, the stockings he required needed to provide a greater degree of compression than his day-to-day pair. None had been ordered by Mr C's doctor and none of the standard sizes fitted him. As a result, Mr C's surgery was delayed. Mr C said he felt this was unacceptable and that staff had failed to recognise the serious inconvenience this had caused him.

We took independent advice from a consultant vascular surgeon and consultant physician. They found that it was unreasonable for the board to have not ensured the correct size of stocking was available. We therefore upheld this aspect of Mr C's complaint.

Mr C said that staff had made fun of his unusual size, which he considered unprofessional. We were unable to investigate this aspect of Mr C's complaint as it was not possible to confirm what had been said.

Mr C also complained that he had not been provided with an appropriate level of information about the planned surgical procedure and that he had subsequently found out there were possible serious side effects. Mr C said he would not have consented to the procedure had he been aware of these.

We found, however, that the decision not to proceed with surgery due to the correct size of stockings not being available was appropriate given Mr C's medical history.

With regard to the information provided to Mr C about his surgical options, the advisers found that this was adequate and set out clearly the possible risks of surgery. We therefore did not uphold this aspect of Mr C's complaint.

Recommendations

We recommended that the board:

- remind the doctor concerned of the importance of confirming prior to surgery whether custom-made stockings are required and ensuring these are available on the day of surgery.