

SPSO decision report

Case: 201507862, Greater Glasgow and Clyde NHS Board
Sector: health
Subject: clinical treatment / diagnosis
Outcome: not upheld, no recommendations

Summary

Mr C complained about the care and treatment he received at Inverclyde Royal Hospital for arthritis in his thumbs. He said that following initial treatment with steroid injections, the consultant orthopaedic surgeon at the hospital suggested Mr C have surgery on his left thumb. The procedure involved the removal of the trapezium (a small bone at the base of the thumb) and filling the space with a tendon sling. The surgery was carried out by an orthopaedic registrar under the supervision of the consultant and Mr C said it was unsuccessful.

Mr C raised several concerns about his care and treatment. Mr C complained that despite assurance from the consultant that he would be carrying out the procedure, the consultant unreasonably allowed the registrar to perform it. He also said that at the review clinics following surgery, the consultant dismissed Mr C's concerns about his hand getting smaller, muscle wastage, an enlarged vein in his elbow and pain in his shoulder.

We took independent medical advice from a consultant orthopaedic and trauma surgeon and found that there was no evidence in Mr C's records to indicate that the consultant committed to undertaking the surgery. We acknowledged that Mr C said the consultant gave this undertaking, but without documentary evidence it was not possible to determine exactly what had happened. The adviser said it was appropriate for the registrar to carry out the surgery assisted by the consultant.

The adviser found that the care and treatment following Mr C's surgery was appropriate and that his symptoms were not the direct result of the surgery.