

SPSO decision report

Case: 201508599, Lothian NHS Board
Sector: health
Subject: clinical treatment / diagnosis
Outcome: not upheld, no recommendations

Summary

Mr C complained on behalf of his late sister (Miss A) about the care that she received at the Western General Hospital, in particular that she was prescribed methotrexate (a drug to suppress the immune system) for Crohn's disease (a long-term condition that causes inflammation of the lining of the digestive system). Miss A was diagnosed with tumours in her liver and bone marrow and died around a week later. Mr C understood that Miss A had refused methotrexate in the past and was concerned that it had been given to her without her knowledge.

We took independent medical advice and found that the prescribing of methotrexate in Miss A's case was reasonable and in keeping with national guidance on the management of Crohn's disease. Miss A's Crohn's disease was complex and had been difficult to control with medication. We did not identify evidence to show that Miss A had refused methotrexate but that surgery had been offered as an alternative which she declined.