

## SPSO decision report

**Case:** 201508665, A Medical Practice in the Grampian NHS Board area

**Sector:** health

**Subject:** clinical treatment / diagnosis

**Outcome:** not upheld, no recommendations

### Summary

Mrs C complained to us that after having had surgery on her wrist she attended the medical practice to have four stitches removed by the practice nurse. The practice nurse removed the stitches but Mrs C continued to have problems with the wound site and developed infections. She was referred back to the clinic where the surgery was performed and it was discovered that one of the stitches had not been removed and was the cause of the infections. Mrs C believed that the practice had failed to appropriately remove all of the stitches following the surgery.

We took independent advice from an adviser in general practice medicine and a nursing adviser. The clinical adviser said that the practice had provided Mrs C with appropriate treatment when she reported concerns following the surgery. The doctors prescribed antibiotic medication and made an appropriate referral for an orthopaedic opinion. The nursing adviser explained that a recognised complication when removing stitches is that a small piece can remain under the skin but would, over time, make its way to the surface. This could cause infection but would not necessarily indicate that a failing in care had occurred. In light of the advice we received, we did not uphold Mrs C's complaint.