

SPSO decision report

Case: 201508793, Greater Glasgow and Clyde NHS Board
Sector: health
Subject: clinical treatment / diagnosis
Outcome: not upheld, no recommendations

Summary

Mrs C complained about the standard of clinical and nursing care provided to her mother (Mrs A) at Inverclyde Royal Hospital and the Royal Alexandra Hospital. Mrs C said Mrs A was suffering from non-Hodgkin lymphoma and had been unreasonably denied chemotherapy treatment at the Royal Alexandra Hospital, against her clearly stated wishes. Mrs C believed her mother had not been provided with the appropriate antibiotic therapy and that she had been allowed to lie in a position in bed which exacerbated the pneumonia she acquired at Inverclyde Royal Hospital. Overall, Mrs C believed the treatment her mother had received had increased the speed of her decline, causing her unnecessary suffering and denying her family time with her.

We took independent advice from a consultant geriatrician and a nurse. The advice we received was that the clinical and nursing treatment provided to Mrs A was of a reasonable standard overall. It had been a reasonable decision not to proceed with chemotherapy as Mrs A was suffering from repeated and serious infections and was becoming increasingly frail. The advice found that this was explained appropriately as soon as practically possible after the decision had been made.

We noted that while Mrs A had been in hospital, the board had failed to provide her with adequate fluids over a weekend. This had already been recognised by the board during their own investigation and we were advised that the steps the board had taken were adequate to address the issue. The advice noted that overall Mrs A had been in hospital for 44 days and, with the exception of the weekend period, they considered her treatment reasonable.

We found that on balance the overall standard of clinical and nursing care was reasonable and therefore we did not uphold Mrs C's complaint.