

SPSO decision report

Case: 201601665, Lothian NHS Board - Acute Division

Sector: health

Subject: clinical treatment / diagnosis

Decision: not upheld, no recommendations

Summary

Mrs C had a family history of DVT (deep venous thrombosis, a blood clot in a vein). During her pregnancy she suffered cramps and pain in her calves. She therefore underwent a scan of her right leg. This scan was clear but because she continued to complain of pain, Mrs C underwent a further scan. Mrs C said that the scan was of her left leg, although the board said it was of her right leg. After Mrs C gave birth, a further scan confirmed a pulmonary embolism (a clot in the blood vessel that transports blood to the heart and the lungs) and a DVT in her left leg.

Mrs C complained to the board that despite her many complaints, they did not refer her to haematology (the specialism concerned with the study of blood and blood-related disorders) and that they failed to properly carry out the second scan. In response, the board said that Mrs C should have been reviewed by a senior doctor and probably referred back for a further scan. However, Mrs C still felt that the scan had been carried out incorrectly.

We obtained independent haematology advice and found that although scans were a good diagnostic tool for DVT of the upper leg, they were not as reliable for the calf. We found that an examination had not shown evidence of a clot in Mrs C's lower leg. Furthermore, the scan about which Mrs C complained had been carried out in a reasonable way and Mrs C had been reviewed on three occasions during the five days after this scan. Despite the board's own conclusion, we found that the management and care received by Mrs C following her scan was reasonable. We therefore did not uphold Mrs C's complaint.