

SPSO decision report

Case: 201603555, A Medical Practice in the Fife NHS Board area
Sector: health
Subject: clinical treatment / diagnosis
Outcome: not upheld, no recommendations

Summary

Mr C complained about the care and treatment he received from his medical practice. Mr C had been admitted to hospital to receive treatment for chronic liver disease. When he was discharged from hospital, the medication he was prescribed was a lower dosage than he had been taking previously. Mr C raised concerns that the medication he was prescribed by the practice prior to admission was excessive.

We took independent medical advice. We found that Mr C's medication had changed whilst he was in hospital because his condition had changed. The adviser explained that medications are often reviewed or withdrawn when patients are in hospital settings, yet this does not mean that the pre-existing medication was either incorrect or excessive in dosage. We did not find evidence that Mr C had been prescribed excessive medication and for this reason we did not uphold this aspect of his complaint.

Mr C also raised concerns that appropriate investigations were not arranged when he reported pain in his chest and back to GPs at the practice. Mr C was subsequently diagnosed with osteoporosis (a condition that affects the bones, causing them to become fragile and more likely to break), but felt he should have received treatment for this condition sooner. We found that the practice had initially referred Mr C for acupuncture, and that this was because he had a history of pain following a previous injury and had received acupuncture previously. We found this to be reasonable and did not consider that there was a clinical indication that Mr C had osteoporosis until he attended a consultation around three months later. At this consultation, an x-ray was arranged, which confirmed Mr C's diagnosis. The practice then prescribed Mr C two medications to help protect his bones.

We considered that the practice investigated Mr C's condition reasonably and provided appropriate treatment. We did not uphold this aspect of Mr C's complaint.

We noted that the practice had acknowledged that they had not handled Mr C's complaint fully in accordance with the 'Can I help you?' guidance for handling healthcare complaints. While we were critical of this, we found that the practice had undertaken a significant event review and we were satisfied that the practice had taken steps to identify what went wrong and learn from this shortcoming. We therefore made no recommendations.