

SPSO decision report

Case: 201604553, A Medical Practice in the Lothian NHS Board area
Sector: health
Subject: clinical treatment / diagnosis
Decision: not upheld, no recommendations

Summary

Mrs C complained about the care and treatment her late husband (Mr A) received from his medical practice. She said that over an eight week period, staff at the practice failed to provide her husband with appropriate clinical treatment in view of his reported symptoms. Mrs C said her husband was subsequently diagnosed with terminal lung cancer and died shortly after. Mrs C complained that the practice failed to look at, examine and listen to her husband. She complained that they were dismissive and that they took too long to recognise how ill he was. She said her husband had a past diagnosis of cancer and that this should have alerted the practice to the possibility of a return of the cancer.

We obtained independent advice on the case from a GP. We found that the care and treatment the practice provided to Mr A was appropriate. We found that Mr A's medical records did not evidence any failure in taking his history or in examining him, that Mr A's investigations and referrals were of a reasonable standard and there was not any significant delay in these being carried out.

The adviser did not consider that a history of treated cancer 37 years earlier should have alerted the practice to consider an alternative diagnosis in Mr A's case. We found that Mr A's chest x-ray, taken in hospital approximately six weeks after Mr A first attended the practice, was normal with no evidence of lung cancer. We found his case records did not contain evidence of him reporting red flag symptoms or signs to either the GP or to the hospital doctor.

We concluded that the practice did not fail to provide Mr A with appropriate clinical treatment in view of his reported symptoms and we did not uphold Mrs C's complaint.