

SPSO decision report

Case: 201604579, Fife NHS Board
Sector: health
Subject: clinical treatment / diagnosis
Outcome: not upheld, no recommendations

Summary

Mr C complained to the board about various aspects of the care and treatment which was provided to his son (Mr A) at the Victoria Hospital. Mr A saw his GP, who sent him to hospital with a diagnosis of viral meningitis. Mr A was discharged after clinicians at the hospital made a diagnosis of a viral infection. He was admitted to intensive care the following day and was diagnosed with meningitis. Mr A died a short time later.

Mr C felt that the clinicians should have acted on the GP's diagnosis and that a lumbar puncture (a medical procedure where a needle is inserted into the lower part of the spine) should have been carried out.

We took independent advice from a consultant in emergency medicine. We concluded that although the GP had made a provisional diagnosis of viral meningitis, the staff involved took full note of Mr A's symptoms, carried out appropriate observations and investigations, and arrived at a reasonable diagnosis before discharging Mr A. Initially some of Mr A's results were abnormal but they improved over the time he was in A&E. We also found that there was no clinical indication to admit Mr A to hospital or carry out further investigations. We therefore did not uphold Mr C's complaint.