

## SPSO decision report

**Case:** 201607993, A Medical Practice in the Lanarkshire NHS Board area  
**Sector:** health  
**Subject:** clinical treatment / diagnosis  
**Decision:** not upheld, no recommendations

### Summary

Mr C complained to us that the medical practice had failed to provide appropriate care and treatment to his late wife (Mrs C). He said that Mrs C died from cancer and that he requested a copy of her medical records from the practice. He noted that two years prior to his wife's death she had attended the practice with an eight week history of abdominal pain. He had checked the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) guidance and this said that a CA125 blood test (a test used to diagnose ovarian cancer) should have been carried out. The blood test was not performed at the first consultation. Mr C felt that his wife had met the criteria for the test and had it been carried out, it may have identified her cancer earlier. He also said that his wife attended the practice 12 months later and again the CA125 blood test was not taken.

The guidance states that clinicians should carry out tests if a woman (especially if 50 or over) reports having any of a number of symptoms on a persistent or frequent basis (particularly more than 12 times per month). Abdominal pain is one of the stated symptoms. We took independent GP advice and found that at the first consultation, the practice had provided a reasonable level of care. It was recorded that Mrs C had reported an eight week history of right sided abdominal pain and tiredness with no change in bowel habit. Antibiotics were prescribed along with blood tests (not including CA125) with a further review. The adviser said that it was not a failing in care not to have requested a CA125 blood test as the guidance does not define 'persistent or frequent basis' in terms of length of time of having symptoms. Although Mrs C was over 50 and had symptoms for eight weeks, the guidance does not specifically state that a CA125 blood test is required in such a situation. We did not uphold the complaint, but highlighted that it would have been best practice for Mrs C to have been asked to return if her symptoms persisted following the course of antibiotics.