

## SPSO decision report

**Case:** 201608215, Greater Glasgow and Clyde NHS Board - Acute Services Division  
**Sector:** health  
**Subject:** clinical treatment / diagnosis  
**Decision:** not upheld, no recommendations

### Summary

Mrs C complained about the care and treatment provided to her late husband (Mr A) at Queen Elizabeth University Hospital.

Mr A attended the board's respiratory clinic over the course of a number of months. The board's consultant respiratory physicians were concerned that Mr A was suffering from mesothelioma (a rare type of cancer that is linked to asbestos exposure). The board arranged for blood tests, a scan, and a biopsy. The results showed no evidence of cancer. However, the consultant remained concerned about this. Mr A's condition deteriorated over the course of the following months, and the consultant said that while a diagnosis of mesothelioma was not proven, it was very likely. The board made arrangements for oxygen therapy for Mr A, however his condition deteriorated and he suffered a cardiac arrest and died.

Mrs C complained that the board failed to give Mr A a firm diagnosis of mesothelioma within a reasonable timeframe. She also raised concerns about a nurse failing to visit after the oxygen for oxygen therapy was delivered to Mrs C and Mr A's house. Mrs C also complained that the board did not communicate the severity of Mr A's illness to his family.

We took independent advice from a consultant respiratory physician and from a nurse. We found that there are recognised difficulties with diagnosing mesothelioma. We found that the board conducted appropriate investigations, but also balanced their concerns about mesothelioma with the possibility that Mr A was suffering from a different condition. We found this to be reasonable. Regarding Mrs C's concerns about nursing staff, we found that there were limited records available to suggest that staff had advised that they would attend. We found that whether nursing staff will follow up in these circumstances is dependent on local arrangements, and that it was reasonable not to arrange a follow-up. In relation to Mrs C's concerns about communication, we found that there were records which suggested that staff had attempted to explain the situation to Mrs C and Mr A. We did not uphold Mrs C's complaints.