

## SPSO decision report

**Case:** 201608353, A Medical Practice in the Greater Glasgow and Clyde NHS Board area  
**Sector:** health  
**Subject:** clinical treatment / diagnosis  
**Decision:** not upheld, no recommendations

### Summary

Mrs C complained to us about the care and treatment she received at her GP practice. She considered that the practice delayed in diagnosing the severity of circulation problems in her leg and she questioned the treatment she had received. Mrs C felt that she should have been referred to the hospital's vascular department sooner. She believed that if she had been provided with appropriate clinical treatment and referred to vascular surgeons earlier then she may not have had to have her lower leg amputated.

We took independent advice from a GP adviser. We found that the assessment and treatment provided to Mrs C by the practice doctors was reasonable and appropriate and was in accordance with national guidelines. We found that there was no unreasonable delay by the practice in making the referral to the vascular department and that the referral did not require to be urgent because, at the time Mrs C was assessed, there was nothing to suggest critical ischaemia (an advanced state of peripheral artery disease and a threat to a limb). In addition, the referral had appropriately requested further investigation and clearly stated that Mrs C's doctor suspected vascular disease and asked that a doppler scan (a non-invasive test that can be used to estimate the patient's blood flow through blood vessels by bouncing high-frequency sound waves off of circulating red blood cells) be arranged. We also considered that there was no evidence to support the view that an earlier referral by the practice could have avoided the loss of Mrs C's lower leg.

Taking account of the evidence available, and the advice we received, we did not uphold Mrs C's complaints.