

SPSO decision report

Case: 201700271, Greater Glasgow and Clyde NHS Board - Acute Services Division
Sector: health
Subject: clinical treatment / diagnosis
Decision: not upheld, no recommendations

Summary

A number of years ago Mrs C was diagnosed as suffering from pseudoseizures (episodes that resemble, and are often misdiagnosed as, epileptic seizures). However, after a referral to cardiology from her GP some years later, it was determined that she had a heart problem and required a pacemaker. Mrs C subsequently had a pacemaker fitted and said that, since then, she had not suffered any further seizures.

Mrs C said that there had been a failure to recognise that her problems could relate to her heart, despite being under the care of the board in between her diagnosis with pseudoseizures and the diagnosis of a heart condition. She complained to the board, who responded and said that they felt her condition had been treated reasonably. They said that, until Mrs C was referred to cardiology, there had been no reason to suspect that she had heart problems. Mrs C was unhappy with this response and brought her complaint to us. Mrs C complained that, over the number of years she was under their care, the board had failed to diagnose and treat her heart condition.

We took independent neurology advice. We found that Mrs C was experiencing 'faints, fits or other funny turns' which, according to the relevant Scottish Intercollegiate Guidelines Network (SIGN) guidance, should prompt an electrocardiogram (ECG - a procedure used for measuring the electrical activity of the heart). We found that Mrs C was appropriately monitored with ECGs. For this reason, we did not uphold her complaint. We also noted that the ECGs, had not, in any event, revealed her heart problem, as only a prolonged recording would have been likely to have detected this.