

SPSO decision report

Case: 201702963, Grampian NHS Board
Sector: health
Subject: clinical treatment / diagnosis
Decision: not upheld, no recommendations

Summary

Mrs C complained about the care and treatment her late husband (Mr A) received from the board's out-of-hours emergency care centre and during his time as an in-patient at Aberdeen Royal Infirmary. In particular, Mrs C was dissatisfied that the out-of-hours service did not admit Mr A to hospital at the time and that after he was admitted around a week later, he died following a head scan.

We took independent advice from a general practitioner in relation to the out-of-hours care and treatment. We found that an appropriate medical history was taken and an appropriate examination performed. We considered that it was not necessary to repeat blood tests that had been done at Mr A's GP practice which were found to be abnormal. We found that the out-of-hours service's decision not to admit Mr A to hospital was in keeping with national guidelines on the treatment of community acquired pneumonia (an infection of the lungs) and that appropriate antibiotic treatment was prescribed with follow-up review advised. Therefore, we considered that the out-of-hours care was reasonable and we did not uphold this aspect of Mrs C's complaint.

In terms of the hospital care and treatment, we took independent advice from a consultant in general medicine. We considered overall that there was evidence to show that the severity of Mr A's illness was recognised and responded to appropriately. We found that it was reasonable to perform a head scan given Mr A's increasing confusion and there was evidence to show that his clinical observations (temperature, pulse, blood pressure and breathing rate) were stable before it was carried out. We found that there was evidence to support that communication took place with Mrs C and the family regarding Mr A's deteriorating condition and the possibility that he might not survive. We did not uphold this aspect of Mrs C's complaint but provided feedback to the board about checking a families understanding of information given to them.