

SPSO decision report



Case: 201703784, Dumfries and Galloway NHS Board
Sector: health
Subject: clinical treatment / diagnosis
Decision: upheld, recommendations

Summary

Mrs C complained about the care and treatment that her mother (Mrs A) received at Dumfries and Galloway Royal Infirmary. She was admitted to hospital with a large haematoma (a localised collection of blood outside the blood vessels) on her right leg. Mrs A received treatment and was later discharged. After a visit from the district nurse, Mrs A was readmitted to hospital and her leg was operated on the following day. Mrs A was eventually discharged to a hospital outwith the board. Mrs C complained that the board failed to provide appropriate treatment for Mrs A's haematoma following her admission to hospital. She also complained that the board unreasonably discharged Mrs A from hospital.

We took independent advice from a registered general nurse and a consultant in general medicine. We found that there was a lack of wound assessment, inappropriate wound assessment and a failure to debride the wound (to remove the damaged tissue from the wound) before discharge. We were also concerned about the use of dressings which stuck to Mrs A's leg and considered Mrs A should have been referred to a wound care specialist. We considered that these failings would have contributed to the time taken for Mrs A's wound to heal and her pain during that period. Initially Mrs A received appropriate medical care, with appropriate investigations carried out on admission and clear attention to detail. However, we found that Mrs A should have received a greater level of medical review prior to discharge, and her care therefore fell below a reasonable standard. We upheld this part of Mrs C's complaint.

In relation to Mrs A's discharge, we found that Mrs A should have received a debridement before discharge. We were also concerned about the level of medical review Mrs A received in the days before her discharge. Given the severity of Mrs A's wound a few days later, and the lack of detail in the records at the time of discharge, we were not confident that Mrs A's wound had improved significantly and enough for Mrs A to return home safely. Therefore, we considered Mrs A's discharge to be unreasonable and upheld this part of Mrs C's complaint.

Recommendations