

SPSO decision report

Case: 201707788, Dumfries and Galloway NHS Board
Sector: health
Subject: clinical treatment / diagnosis
Decision: some upheld, recommendations

Summary

Mrs C complained that the board failed to carry out her total knee replacement appropriately in Dumfries and Galloway Royal Infirmary. Mrs C suffered pain and stiffness after the operation and eventually had to have a revised total knee replacement at another hospital.

We took independent advice from a consultant orthopaedic surgeon (a specialist in the treatment of diseases and injuries of the musculoskeletal system). Although there was evidence of malalignment (incorrect or imperfect alignment) of the knee on the x-rays and CT scan carried out some time after the operation, a few degrees of variation would not be unusual. This was unlikely to have contributed to the stiffness Mrs C experienced. We found that that without the benefit of hindsight, there was no evidence that the operation had not been reasonably carried out. Therefore, we did not uphold this aspect of Mrs C's complaint.

Mrs C also complained that the care and treatment provided to her after the operation was unreasonable. We found that, in general, the care and treatment provided to Mrs C after the operation was reasonable. However, we found that a letter the board issued to the hospital where she had the revised total knee replacement contained a number of inaccuracies. For this reason, we upheld this aspect of Mrs C's complaint.

Finally Mrs C complained that the board refused to lend her a continuous passive motion (CPM) machine. We found that it would not be routine for a patient to be given a CPM machine. We found that the board's actions in relation to this matter were reasonable. We did not uphold this aspect of the complaint.

Recommendations

What we asked the organisation to do in this case:

- Apologise to Mrs C that their referral letter to another hospital contained inaccuracies. The apology should meet the standards set out in the SPSO guidelines on apology available at www.spsso.org.uk/leaflets-and-guidance.

What we said should change to put things right in future:

- Referral letters should be accurate.