

SPSO decision report

Case: 201708211, Tayside NHS Board
Sector: health
Subject: clinical treatment / diagnosis
Decision: some upheld, no recommendations

Summary

Ms C attended Perth Royal Infirmary where she was treated for a suspected stroke. Her condition improved but she was found to have sustained brain damage, leaving her with ongoing communication difficulties. Ms C complained that her symptoms were misread, and that she was misdiagnosed and mistreated for a stroke. She considered that the treatment (thrombolysis injection to dissolve a suspected clot) contributed to her brain injury and resulting speech difficulties.

We took independent advice from a consultant geriatrician (a specialist in medicine of the elderly). We considered that Ms C's symptoms, together with CT scan findings, supported the diagnosis of a stroke. We found that the treatment given was appropriate to the findings, and did not cause any direct side effects. Therefore, we did not uphold this aspect of Ms C's complaint.

Ms C also complained about a delay in responding to her complaint, and errors and inconsistencies in the response. The board had acknowledged that the response was delayed and apologised to Ms C. They told us that they had reminded staff of the need to ensure complainants are provided with updates if deadlines are not going to be met. We recognised the complexity of the complaint contributed to the delay and, on balance, considered that the response was reasonable and proportionate. However, we did not consider that the board fully explained the reasons for the delay to Ms C and found that they did not agree a revised target timescale as they are required to do. For this reason, we upheld this aspect of Ms C's complaint but made no further recommendations.