

SPSO decision report

Case: 201805361, Lanarkshire NHS Board
Sector: health
Subject: clinical treatment / diagnosis
Decision: not upheld, no recommendations

Summary

Mr C complained about the care and treatment provided to him by the board in relation to a pacemaker implantation (a device that generates electrical impulses delivered by electrodes to contract the heart muscles and regulate the heart). After Mr C had his pacemaker implanted, he attended hospital on several occasions as he was aware of having palpitations (noticeably rapid, strong or irregular heartbeat). Some months after implantation, it was found that Mr C had a heart failure as a result of the pacemaker. Mr C raised concern that it took several months to detect the heart failure and take action on this.

We took independent advice from a cardiologist (a medical specialist who diagnoses and treats disorders of the heart). We found that the monitoring of Mr C's pacemaker was reasonable, and that no problems were identified during this monitoring. We found that Mr C was not experiencing any symptoms of heart failure and therefore there would have been no reason for the board to suspect this. We determined that the finding of heart failure was incidental, and when identified it was acted upon in a timely and appropriate manner.

We noted that the risk of heart failure was not outlined on the consent form for Mr C's pacemaker implantation and that this was technically a failing. However, we found that national practice does not currently reflect that this risk is not routinely included anywhere on consent forms in the NHS at this point. Therefore, while we considered that it may be good practice to raise the risk of heart failure when taking consent for pacemaker implantation, as the risk is not one that is nationally recognised or currently reflected in practice and guidance, we did not consider this to be a failing of the board with regards to required actions and reasonableness. We did not uphold this aspect of Mr C's complaint.

Mr C also complained about the board's communication with him regarding his pacemaker and heart failure. We found that communication was prompt and covered all issues reasonably. We did not uphold this aspect of Mr C's complaint.