

SPSO decision report



Case: 201806794, A Medical Practice in the Highland NHS Board area
Sector: health
Subject: clinical treatment / diagnosis
Decision: not upheld, no recommendations

Summary

Mrs C's complaint concerned the care and treatment given to her late husband (Mr A) by his GP practice. Mr A first attended the practice with lower back pain but later attended with testicular pain. After an examination he was informed that there was suspicion of prostate cancer. An urgent referral was subsequently made by his GP and he was advised that there was a high risk that he had prostate cancer which had spread. Mr A later died. Mrs C complained that the practice had failed to properly investigate Mr A's testicular and back pain, and that their referral letter misrepresented the situation. Mrs C also complained that Mr A had been prescribed morphine which caused hallucinations and that no palliative care plan had been made for him.

We took independent advice from a GP. We found that Mr A was treated reasonably and appropriately; there had been no delay in his diagnosis and an urgent referral had been made in a timely way. There was no evidence of misleading information in the referral letter and it was in line with General Medical Council Good Medical Practice. We also found that morphine could cause side-effects, particularly towards the end of life and that Mr A had been referred to the community palliative care team. We did not uphold the complaint.