

SPSO decision report

Case: 201903553, Tayside NHS Board
Sector: Health
Subject: Clinical treatment / diagnosis
Decision: not upheld, no recommendations

Summary

C complained about the treatment their late spouse (A) received from Tayside NHS board. Following a fall, A required emergency hip replacement surgery. A developed a severe infection in their wound following the surgery and later died as a result of this infections. C complained that the board inappropriately ignored issues with A's stomach when prescribing antibiotics. C also considered that A was required to attend hospital appointments unnecessarily when their condition became untreatable. C stated that at a meeting to discuss their complaint after A's death the board told them that A had not been expected to live. C said they were shocked and had not been told this before.

The board stated A's treatment had been reasonable. Staff had responded appropriately to A's serious infection. Although every step had been taken to avoid infection, these did occur. A's condition had been regularly reviewed and advice taken from microbiology specialists to try and optimise A's treatment.

We took independent medical advice from a orthopaedic surgeon (a specialist in the treatment of diseases and injuries of the musculoskeletal system). We found A's treatment was reasonable. They were regularly reviewed and their antibiotics were changed in order to try and improve their outcome. In addition, we noted that A's condition was such that it was not unreasonable for them to have their wound dressed as an out-patient. Therefore, we did not uphold C's complaints.