

SPSO decision report

Case: 201904735, Grampian NHS Board
Sector: Health
Subject: Clinical treatment / diagnosis
Decision: not upheld, no recommendations

Summary

C attended the Grampian Medical Emergency Department (GMED) out-of-hours service with severe pain in their arms and shoulders. They were referred to the Acute Medical Initial Assessment Unit (AMIA) and then transferred to the Stroke Unit, a unit that has capacity to receive patients with non-stroke problems when the hospital is busy.

C received multiple tests, including multiple electrocardiograms (ECG, test to check a patient's heart rhythm and electrical activity) in order to diagnose the cause of their symptoms. It was determined to be a trapped nerve in C's neck and C was discharged from hospital with a prescription for medication for nerve pain and sensitivity.

C complained that there were failings in communication and record-keeping during their admission and that this led to the unnecessary repetition of ECG tests and a delay in administering pain medication. They also raised concerns that they had been told they had a liver infection requiring antibiotics but this was not recorded, meaning that antibiotics were not prescribed.

We took independent advice from a consultant geriatrician (a doctor who specialises in medicine of the elderly). We found that the treatment C received during their stay in hospital was reasonable and consistent with the symptoms they experienced and that the communications recorded were reasonable. Therefore, we did not uphold these complaints.