

SPSO decision report

Case: 201905821, Tayside NHS Board
Sector: Health
Subject: clinical treatment / diagnosis
Decision: not upheld, no recommendations

Summary

C complained on behalf of their parent (A) about the care and treatment they received during an admission to Ninewells Hospital. A was given a working diagnosis of a urinary tract infection (UTI) with delirium but was later diagnosed with encephalitis (inflammation of the brain). C said that because A regularly suffered UTIs, assumptions were made that A was experiencing the same again. C said that, as a result, appropriate investigations were not carried out and there was an unreasonable delay in diagnosis which affected A's outcome.

The board said that a UTI had been given as a reasonable working diagnosis and that blood and urine tests confirmed this. They considered that A had been treated reasonably in the circumstances.

We took independent medical advice. We found that at the time of their admission, A had non-specific symptoms which were reasonable to diagnose as a UTI. When A deteriorated and their symptoms changed, A was cared for reasonably with an appropriate degree of urgency, and a prompt diagnosis of encephalitis was made. While A suffered a poor outcome, we could not conclude that this was as a result of an unreasonable delay in diagnosis. We did not uphold C's complaint.