

SPSO decision report

Case: 201909091, Golden Jubilee National Hospital
Sector: Health
Subject: clinical treatment / diagnosis
Decision: some upheld, recommendations

Summary

C complained about the care and treatment provided by the Golden Jubilee National Hospital. C underwent knee arthroscopy (a type of keyhole surgery used to diagnose and treat joint problems). Around two weeks later, C developed what was considered to be a surface infection, for which they were prescribed antibiotics and given another appointment for later in the week. Two days later, C attended another hospital's emergency department with pain and swelling. They required further surgery to wash out the joint. C complained that the decision to carry out the knee arthroscopy had been unreasonable, and that the care and treatment provided when they had an infection was unreasonable.

We took independent advice from an orthopaedic surgeon (a specialist in the treatment of diseases and injuries of the musculoskeletal system). We found that the decision to carry out an arthroscopy on C's knee had been unreasonable, as C had severe arthritis and carrying out the surgery was contrary to British Medical Journal Clinical Practice Guidelines. We upheld this aspect of C's complaint.

In relation to C's treatment when they had an infection, we found that it was reasonable for the surgeon to consider this to be a superficial wound infection rather than a deep wound infection, and the care and treatment provided for this was reasonable. We did not uphold this aspect of C's complaint.

Recommendations

What we asked the organisation to do in this case:

- Apologise to C for unreasonably carrying out a knee arthroscopy. The apology should meet the standards set out in the SPSO guidelines on apology available at www.spsso.org.uk/information-leaflets.

What we said should change to put things right in future:

- Knee arthroscopies should not be carried out in patients such as C with degenerative knee disease, in line with relevant clinical guidelines.

We have asked the organisation to provide us with evidence that they have implemented the recommendations we have made on this case by the deadline we set.