

SPSO decision report

Case: 202102504, Ayrshire and Arran NHS Board
Sector: Health
Subject: Clinical treatment / diagnosis
Decision: not upheld, no recommendations

Summary

C complained to the board about the treatment provided to their late relative (A) who died of a ruptured bowel. A had been in University Hospital Ayr two weeks previously with symptoms of severe pain. Staff had carried out tests and a scan, and discharged A home without follow-up. C believed that the board should have carried out more intensive investigations, which may have discovered A was still having bowel problems and provided additional treatment. The board believed that appropriate treatment had been provided.

We took independent advice from a consultant in acute medicine (a specialist in the immediate and early management of adult patients with a wide range of medical conditions who present in hospital as emergencies) and a consultant radiologist (a specialist in diagnosing and treating disease and injury through the use of medical imaging techniques such as x-rays and other scans). We found that staff at the hospital provided a reasonable standard of treatment based on A's reported symptoms. We also found that it was not unreasonable to discharge A home with antibiotics based on the diagnosis of pyelonephritis (kidney infection) following a CT scan. Although a subsequent CT scan carried out on readmission showed evidence of infarct (a small localised area of dead tissue resulting from failure of blood supply) which might have been evident on the original scan, it was not unreasonable to have diagnosed pyelonephritis following the original scan. We therefore did not uphold the complaint.