

Case: 201004479, Greater Glasgow and Clyde NHS Board
Sector: health
Subject: clinical treatment / diagnosis
Outcome: not upheld, no recommendations

Summary

Mrs C complained on behalf of her husband, Mr C, who damaged his eye in a DIY accident. Mr C attended A&E at the Royal Alexandra Hospital in July 2010 and was examined by an ophthalmologist. His eye was x-rayed, cleaned and stitched and his sight was tested. An ultrasound was carried out three days later. Mr C's eye did not improve over the following weeks and his sight did not return. The following month a further ultrasound was arranged and he was found to have a detached retina.

Mrs C complained that the detached retina was not diagnosed at the time of Mr C's injury and that the second ultrasound was unreasonably delayed. She also complained that it took the input of a specialist to diagnose the detached retina after the second ultrasound and that the consultant radiologist who made the diagnosis failed to refer Mr C on to the eye clinic in good time.

We found that there was no evidence of retinal detachment at the time of Mr C's first ultrasound and that the diagnosis was, therefore, not missed. We considered that the second ultrasound could have been arranged sooner. However, we did not find that the waiting time was unreasonable in the circumstances, as there was no new evidence to suggest retinal detachment at that time. We were satisfied with the board's procedures for carrying out and reviewing ophthalmic ultrasounds and found that both ultrasounds were reviewed by appropriately trained staff. We felt that the consultant radiologist should have referred Mr C to the eye clinic following diagnosis of his detached retina. However, we did not consider his advice to wait until a forthcoming scheduled appointment would have had a detrimental impact on Mr C's prognosis or overall treatment.