

SPSO decision report

Case: 201100446, A Medical Practice, Tayside NHS Board

Sector: health

Subject: clinical treatment; diagnosis

Outcome: not upheld, recommendations

Summary

Mrs C said that for eleven years she had been prescribed MST (morphine sulphate based medication) but had received a letter from her medical practice saying that the drug would no longer be prescribed. Mrs C complained that she had asked for the decision to be reconsidered but was told it was final. Mrs C said that because of the decision to stop her prescription she suffered very badly from withdrawal symptoms.

As part of our investigation, we discovered that the medical practice had received anonymous information alleging that Mrs C was selling her MST tablets. Because of this the practice requested a toxicology report on a urine sample. This did not show the presence of opiates and so the medical practice considered that it was reasonable to stop prescribing them. As it appeared that Mrs C was not taking the MST prescribed to her, the practice also considered it unlikely that she would have suffered withdrawal symptoms. We did not uphold the complaint but we made a recommendation to the practice.

Recommendation

We recommended that GPs at the practice:

- in future similar cases should seek patient consent before a toxicology screen is requested.