

SPSO decision report

Case: 201104353, The Golden Jubilee National Hospital

Sector: health

Subject: clinical treatment; diagnosis

Outcome: not upheld, no recommendations

Summary

Mr C complained that he was given conflicting advice about what happened to his wife (Mrs A) after she had undergone a coronary procedure to address the narrowing of her arteries. Mr C was unhappy that the doctor did not reflect the seriousness of Mrs A's condition in his reports despite him being taken aside and being advised that she had a 50 percent chance of survival.

Mr C was also unhappy that the doctor maintained that there were no changes to Mrs A's electrocardiogram (ECG - a test that measures the electrical activity in the heart), despite Mrs A having very low blood pressure and a low heart rate.

In response to the complaint, the hospital said that the doctor performed a technically difficult procedure which unfortunately was associated with a complication, which was treated effectively by placing a second stent (an artificial tube) to open up the artery. The hospital advised Mr C that he was told at the time that his wife's condition was not stable and that the doctor was of the view that his reports were an accurate reflection of the events that had taken place. They also said that one of the ECGs was normal and a further one carried out the following day showed inflammation which was not felt to be serious.

After taking advice from our medical adviser, we considered that the doctor's discharge summaries sufficiently detailed the seriousness of the complication that had resulted. We also agreed with the hospital's interpretation of the ECG readings and that it was not unreasonable of the doctor to conclude that there were no changes to the first ECG. That said, we were of the view that it appeared that Mrs A had sustained a mild heart attack, but there was insufficient evidence overall to support that Mr C was given conflicting information about his wife's condition.