

SPSO decision report

Case: 201104850, Tayside NHS Board
Sector: health
Subject: clinical treatment / diagnosis
Outcome: not upheld, no recommendations

Summary

Mrs C's GP referred her to hospital because she suddenly lost the vision in her left eye. She was diagnosed with a blockage of the main artery supplying the retina (the inside lining of the eye), and her loss of vision was severe and permanent. Mrs C attended the hospital again a few days later with similar symptoms affecting her right eye. She was then given a high dose of steroids, as it was suspected she had giant cell arteritis (GCA - inflammation of the blood vessels, usually in the head, which can cause blindness).

Mrs C's husband (Mr C) complained to the board that Mrs C was not closely monitored after being prescribed such a large dose of steroids, but we did not uphold his complaints. After taking independent advice from one of our medical advisers, we found that the relevant consultant kept Mrs C under appropriate review, and there was a clear plan for the management of her steroids. We concluded that although Mrs C did suffer side effects, which were very distressing for her, these were properly assessed against the risk of her losing her eyesight permanently and having a stroke.