

Case: 201102273, Greater Glasgow and Clyde NHS Board - Acute Services Division
Sector: health
Subject: clinical treatment / diagnosis
Outcome: not upheld, recommendations

Summary

Mrs C complained that the board had not explained bruising on her son's chest and neck after he came out of the operating theatre following a procedure. She said that her son (who has a blood disorder) had undergone the procedure regularly over the past eight years but had never sustained bruising. She was also concerned that the board's response to her complaint was contradictory.

The board told Mrs C that the likely cause of the bruising was a combination of force used to remove heart monitor stickers and her son's blood disorder. The board explained that the blood disorder was likely to have been a contributory factor to the bruising on the neck area as no stickers had been placed in this area and it appeared Mrs C's son had been lying on the heart monitor lead during the procedure.

We took advice from our medical adviser, a specialist in working with children with blood disorders. He advised that the most likely cause of the bruising on the chest area was the normal amount of force needed to remove the heart monitor stickers, which was made worse by Mrs C's son's blood disorder. He also considered that the bruising on the neck was likely to have occurred as a result of her son's lying position on the wires during the procedure.

We accepted this advice and did not uphold the complaint, but we made a recommendation to ensure that in future parents are aware of the possibility of such bruising.

Recommendation

We recommended that the board

- ensure that parents and carers of children with low platelet counts are warned, either at general counselling stage or when seeking consent for

an operative procedure, about the possibility that mild to reasonable force could cause unnaturally severe bruising.