

## SPSO decision report

**Case:** 201200071, Lothian NHS Board - Acute Division

**Sector:** health

**Subject:** clinical treatment / diagnosis

**Outcome:** some upheld, no recommendations

### Summary

Mrs C was treated in hospital for a sub-arachnoid haemorrhage (bleeding into the area between the brain and the thin tissues that cover it) that required emergency surgery. She complained that during her stay in hospital, she contracted bacterial meningitis (inflammation of the protective membranes covering the brain and spinal cord) as a result of an external ventricular drain (a device used in neurosurgery) that was inserted to control an abnormal build-up of cerebrospinal fluid (a clear colourless fluid produced in part of the brain). Mrs C was treated with antibiotic therapy administered intravenously (into a vein) and intrathecally (into the spinal subarachnoid space - the compartment within the spinal column which contains the cerebrospinal fluid). Her condition stabilised and she was later discharged home.

Mrs C told us that she continued to suffer a number of debilitating symptoms including no sense of smell or taste, frequent headaches, and lack of

co-ordination and concentration; and said that she has been unable to return to work. She attributes this to receiving inadequate care and treatment during her stay at the hospital. Mrs C also complained about matters related to the patient's charter, prescribed medication, her visitor allocation, treatment by staff and the response to her complaint.

As part of our investigation, we obtained independent advice from two medical advisers, who considered all aspects of Mrs C's care. We took account of their advice alongside all the documents provided by Mrs C and the board. Our investigation found no evidence of any failure in the care and treatment Mrs C received, either in relation to the fact that she contracted bacterial meningitis, or with her medication, visitors or treatment by staff. We did uphold her complaints about the patient's charter and the board's complaint response, but did not find it necessary to make any recommendations.