

SPSO decision report

Case: 201200903, A Medical Practice in the Ayrshire and Arran NHS Board area
Sector: health
Subject: clinical treatment / diagnosis
Outcome: not upheld, no recommendations

Summary

Mr A had several consultations at the practice over four months, complaining of ongoing and increasing pain in his hip and knee. Mr A was then admitted to hospital and was diagnosed with lung cancer that had spread to his liver and bones. Mr A died a month after being admitted.

Mr A's wife (Mrs C) complained that if her husband been diagnosed sooner, he could have lived longer and had better pain relief.

As part of our investigation, we took independent advice from a medical adviser. The adviser said that the practice had carried out and arranged for appropriate investigations in an attempt to establish the reasons for Mr A's pain. They arranged chest and hip x-rays at an early stage, but these did not show any signs of cancer. The practice had prescribed stronger pain relief and referred Mr A to an orthopaedic specialist when the pain continued. Although the practice did not re-check a slightly abnormal blood test result within the specified period of a week, the adviser did not consider that the actual delay of ten days was unreasonable. The practice acted promptly when this was identified and we did not consider that the ten day delay would have affected what happened to Mr A. In addition, we could not say whether re-checking this sooner would have resulted in Mr A receiving more adequate pain relief or being admitted to hospital more quickly.