

SPSO decision report

Case: 201203049, A Medical Practice in the Dumfries and Galloway NHS Board area
Sector: health
Subject: clinical treatment / diagnosis
Outcome: not upheld, no recommendations

Summary

Mr C's wife (Mrs C) visited a medical practice on a number of occasions complaining of stomach pain. Mr C complained that the practice unreasonably delayed in diagnosing his wife's illness. The practice initially gave Mrs C painkillers. When the pain did not go away the practice took blood tests to rule out cancer. Mrs C then started to complain of weight loss as well as pain. When these symptoms occurred together the doctor referred her to general surgeons at the local hospital, where Mrs C was diagnosed with mesenteric ischemia (a condition that reduces blood flow to the bowel).

To investigate the complaint we took independent advice from one of our medical advisers. He explained that this diagnosis was difficult to make, and would need to be made at a hospital as it required detailed investigations to confirm it. The adviser was satisfied that the practice had referred Mrs C appropriately when she started to have increasing pain and weight loss. The adviser confirmed that there was no evidence of an unreasonable delay in diagnosis.