

SPSO decision report

Case: 201305889, Greater Glasgow and Clyde NHS Board

Sector: health

Subject: clinical treatment / diagnosis

Outcome: not upheld, no recommendations

Summary

Mr C complained that when he attended two dermatology appointments, the consultant reported that she had concerns about two moles on his back. Mr C pointed out that there was a further mole which was causing him concern and he felt the consultant was being dismissive about this. The consultant agreed to investigate the three moles and it turned out that the first two were benign but the third was cancerous. Mr C was concerned that the consultant had not taken his fears seriously, and said that had he not pursued the matter it could have had serious consequences for him.

As part of our investigation we took independent advice from one of our medical advisers. They said that clinicians have to use their clinical judgement in a reasonable manner. In this case, the consultant thought that only two moles required further consideration but in view of the concerns raised at the appointments, she agreed to also look at the third mole. The adviser said that it can be difficult for clinicians to determine whether a mole looks problematic, and whether there is a need for further investigations. Although the consultant did not have any immediate concerns about the third mole, she did agree to further investigation when it was pointed out to her, and the result confirmed Mr C's concerns. We found that the consultant acted appropriately on his concerns, and found no evidence that she failed to exercise her clinical judgement in a reasonable manner.