

SPSO decision report

Case: 201305891, Highland NHS Board
Sector: health
Subject: clinical treatment / diagnosis
Outcome: some upheld, no recommendations

Summary

Mr A was admitted to the Royal Northern Infirmary for rehabilitation. He was suffering from lung cancer as well as recuperating from a stroke and a broken arm. He had a stoma bag (a surgically made pouch on the outside of the body) as a result of an earlier ileostomy (a surgical procedure on the small intestine). It was hoped that he would be able to recover some of his mobility whilst in hospital, but Mr A became unwell after a few days and was transferred to another hospital, where he later died as a result of a blocked bowel. His daughter (Ms C) complained to us about the care and treatment her father received at the Royal Northern Infirmary towards the end of his life.

We took independent advice on Mr A's care from our nursing adviser. We found that as a result of Ms C's complaint, a significant event review was carried out which included several recommendations and actions to be taken. While we found that there were issues about the lack of end of life care and poor communication with Ms C and the rest of the family, we found that the pain assessment, nursing and stoma care Mr A received was reasonable. We, therefore, did not uphold Ms C's complaint about her father's care and treatment.

Ms C also complained that the board failed to deal with her complaint according to their policies and procedures. As we found that there were considerable delays in responding, we upheld this complaint.