

SPSO decision report

Case: 201406041, Grampian NHS Board
Sector: health
Subject: clinical treatment / diagnosis
Outcome: not upheld, no recommendations

Summary

Ms C, who is an advice worker, complained on behalf of her client (Mr B) about the care and treatment given to his late sister (Miss A). After a hysterectomy in February 2013, Miss A was diagnosed as having endometrial cancer (cancer in the lining of the womb) from which she made a good recovery. However, in May 2014, her GP referred her urgently back to hospital as she was suffering from nausea. She was seen shortly afterwards and it was considered that her symptoms related to her recent cancer treatment and the drugs she required to take. Miss A then began to complain of pains in her hip and was referred for a CT scan (which uses x-rays and a computer to create detailed images of the inside of the body). The scan results showed that Miss A had a recurrence of cancer and that it was inoperable. Miss A died in November 2014.

Mr B complained that after her initial cancer treatment in February 2013, the board failed to provide his sister with adequate follow-up. He also said that following Miss A's terminal diagnosis in August 2014, she was not given adequate palliative care.

We took independent advice from a consultant gynaecologist. This showed that after Miss A was first diagnosed with endometrial cancer, her case was discussed by a multi-disciplinary team and on their recommendation, she was given radiotherapy and a number of cycles of chemotherapy. She also attended out-patient clinic appointments in April and November 2013 and then again in April 2014. There was also evidence to show that once she was given a terminal diagnosis, palliative care was instituted for Miss A and Macmillan nurses became involved. She was given pain relief and other medication to reduce her symptoms, but the advice we received was that the extent of Miss A's illness was such that her death could not have been prevented. We did not uphold the complaint.