

SPSO decision report

Case: 201406670, A Medical Practice in the Tayside NHS Board area
Sector: health
Subject: clinical treatment / diagnosis
Outcome: not upheld, no recommendations

Summary

Mr C complained about the care and treatment that his wife (Mrs C) had received from the GP practice before her death from bowel cancer. Mr C said that Mrs C had attended the practice on a number of occasions over a three-year period with abdominal pain. He said that the practice had failed to provide Mrs C with appropriate treatment and had delayed in referring her to a specialist.

We took independent advice on Mr C's complaint from one of our medical advisers, who is a general practitioner. We found that Mrs C had initially attended the practice on a number of occasions with heart burn/dyspepsia (persistent or recurrent abdominal discomfort or pain located in the upper abdomen). Heart burn/dyspepsia are not clinical symptoms identified in patients presenting with bowel cancer and Mrs C had received appropriate treatment for this.

Mrs C had subsequently attended the practice with symptoms of abdominal pain, change in bowel habit and anaemia. She was then urgently referred to the colorectal service in line with the relevant guidelines and was diagnosed with bowel cancer. We found that Mrs C had attended the practice with two different sets of symptoms, which were not related. The practice had provided a reasonable standard of care to Mrs C and we did not identify any failings. We did not uphold the complaint.