

SPSO decision report

Case: 201508062, Tayside NHS Board
Sector: health
Subject: nurses / nursing care
Outcome: some upheld, recommendations

Summary

Mrs C complained that her husband (Mr A) had received inadequate nursing care and treatment when he was a patient at Perth Royal Infirmary. Mr A had a number of health problems including diabetes and had previously had a toe amputated. He then had a major stroke and was transferred to the hospital for rehabilitation.

We took independent nursing advice on the complaint. We upheld Mrs C's complaint as we found that staff had initially failed to dress Mr A's toe amputation wound when he was admitted to the hospital. They had also failed to ensure that his feeding tube (a tube passed through the abdominal wall) was regularly flushed. In addition, nursing staff had failed to inform both Mrs C and the vascular nurse of a wound on one of Mr A's other toes. However, we were satisfied that the board had apologised to Mrs C for the failings in Mr A's care.

Mrs C also complained to us that staff had failed to ensure that suitable arrangements were in place when Mr A was discharged. We found that the discharge planning had been reasonable and we did not uphold this aspect of her complaint.

We upheld Mrs C's complaint that staff had failed to respond appropriately to her verbal complaints. The board had already accepted that complaints she made to staff in the hospital could have been dealt with more effectively and appropriately at the time. They had told Mrs C that they would review the complaints awareness training needs of frontline staff and had apologised to her for the events she had described.

Recommendations

We recommended that the board:

- take steps to ensure that education and training on wound care has been provided to support workers in the hospital; and
- consider reviewing their policy on the care and management of tube feeding.