

SPSO decision report

Case: 201601919, Ayrshire and Arran NHS Board

Sector: health

Subject: clinical treatment / diagnosis

Outcome: not upheld, no recommendations

Summary

Miss C had been experiencing poor health over a number of months and made a suicide attempt by medication overdose. She contacted NHS 24 and was taken to University Hospital Ayr. Miss C's symptoms included slurred speech and problems with walking. Miss C was assessed by nursing, medical and psychiatric staff and was later discharged. The following day, she attended with the same symptoms and was again discharged home. The next day, Miss C's GP arranged for her to attend University Hospital Crosshouse. A scan confirmed Miss C had a brain tumour, which was subsequently operated on. Miss C complained that, despite her presenting symptoms, she was not properly assessed or treated when she attended at University Hospital Ayr.

We took independent advice from a specialist in emergency medicine. We found that at the initial admission, the focus of attention had been on the immediate presenting problems of Miss C's mental health and the effects of the overdose and that the assessment and treatment provided that day were appropriate and reasonable. The adviser said that in normal circumstances, the symptoms Miss C presented with on her second attendance at the hospital should have resulted in further investigation. In this case, however, the adviser noted that the doctors involved had felt it was likely that Miss C's presenting symptoms were related to the overdose the previous day and that it was reasonable that they reached this conclusion. Therefore, we concluded that the assessment was reasonable. We also reviewed Miss C's records and were satisfied that the treatment she received was appropriate. Therefore we did not uphold Miss C's complaint.