

SPSO decision report

Case: 201702192, A Medical Practice in an NHS Board area

Sector: health

Subject: clinical treatment / diagnosis

Decision: some upheld, recommendations

Summary

Mr C complained on behalf of his late father (Mr A) about the care and treatment Mr A received from his GP practice. Mr C complained that Mr A was not referred to dermatology (the branch of medicine dealing with the skin, nails, hair and its diseases) when he first attended the GP Practice, even though his facial lesion had changed shape and colour. Mr C was later diagnosed with skin cancer. Mr C also complained that Mr A was not given appropriate treatment when he later developed health issues, such as a persistent cough, in the last months of his life.

We took independent advice from a GP. We found that the practice should have referred Mr A to dermatology at the outset. The adviser considered that Mr A's lesion was of concern because it had enlarged and changed character. Therefore, we upheld that aspect of Mr A's complaint and we made recommendations to address this. We found that the practice gave Mr A appropriate treatment for the health issues he experienced later and we did not uphold this aspect of the complaint.

Recommendations

What we asked the organisation to do in this case:

- Apologise to Mr C for not referring Mr A to dermatology. The apology should meet the standards set out in the SPSO guidelines on apology available at: <https://www.spsso.org.uk/leaflets-and-guidance>.

What we said should change to put things right in future:

- Patients with suspicious lesions should be referred to dermatology.

We have asked the organisation to provide us with evidence that they have implemented the recommendations we have made on this case by the deadline we set.