

SPSO decision report

Case: 201707309, Tayside NHS Board
Sector: health
Subject: clinical treatment / diagnosis
Decision: not upheld, no recommendations

Summary

Ms C complained to us about the care and treatment her son (Mr A) had received at Ninewells Hospital. Mr A was admitted to the Intensive Care Unit (ICU) with pneumonia (an infection of the lungs) and died within a month of his admission. In particular, Ms C complained that there was a delay in referring Mr A for surgery to treat his pneumonia.

We took independent advice from a consultant in intensive care medicine. We found that there were no failings in the management of Mr A's pneumonia and that his treatment was reasonable and appropriate.

Ms C also complained that Mr A was kept awake during his time in the ICU, even though he had mental health issues and he was experiencing alcohol and nicotine withdrawal. We found that Mr A's level of sedation was assessed appropriately on a daily basis and that he was given a combination of sedative medication that was appropriate for his individual needs. However, we found that in future, the board may wish to consider the use of nicotine patches for patients withdrawing from nicotine.

Ms C raised concerns that there were delays in treating Mr A's diarrhoea. We found that he was appropriately investigated for any underlying infection and in the meantime, his diarrhoea was managed appropriately through the use of a flexiseal device (a bowel movement management device).

We considered that the care and treatment Mr A received was reasonable and did not uphold Ms C's complaint.