

SPSO decision report

Case: 202003174, Lothian NHS Board - Acute Division
Sector: Health
Subject: Clinical treatment / diagnosis
Decision: not upheld, no recommendations

Summary

C complained on behalf of their spouse (A) about the care and treatment they received from the board. A was reviewed by the vascular surgery service (specialists in the treatment of diseases affecting the vascular system including diseases of the arteries, veins and lymphatic vessels) after sustaining an injury to one of their fingers. The injury initially caused some infection which progressed to gangrene (a serious condition where a loss of blood supply causes body tissue to die). A's finger was amputated but the wound did not heal and deteriorated further, leading to the amputation of A's hand. C raised concerns about the timeliness of A's initial finger amputation and that had this been done before the infection progressed, this would have avoided the need for full amputation of A's hand.

We took independent advice from a vascular surgeon. We found that the decision to admit A to hospital and treat with intravenous antibiotics was timely and appropriate. There was evidence of regular review and high quality multi-disciplinary working. We also found that the finger amputation was performed in a timely manner and that there were no published guidelines that were not followed. We considered there was no indication that performing the finger amputation earlier would have prevented the need for hand amputation. Therefore, we did not uphold C's complaint.