

## SPSO decision report

**Case:** 201305859, A Medical Practice in the Lothian NHS Board area  
**Sector:** health  
**Subject:** clinical treatment / diagnosis  
**Outcome:** not upheld, no recommendations

### Summary

Mr C complained to us about the care and treatment given to his late wife (Mrs C). Mrs C had been diagnosed with emphysema (a lung disease) and fibrosis (scarring of the lungs) some years ago. When she attended her medical practice in 2013 complaining of a cough, she was initially treated with antibiotics but after attending again a few weeks later she was referred for a chest x-ray. This showed little change from an x-ray taken a few years before.

A few months later, Mrs C returned to the practice and was referred again for an x-ray. This showed signs of infection and she was given more antibiotics. After at first feeling a little better, Mrs C began to experience shortness of breath and a cough and was referred urgently to the respiratory team at the local hospital. She was then given an x-ray which showed that she had a tumour. Mrs C's condition deteriorated and she died a few months later, around seven months after initially attending the practice about her cough.

Mr C complained that the care and treatment given to Mrs C by the practice was unreasonable. He was particularly concerned at the length of time it took for Mrs C to receive a scan and, therefore, the time taken to provide a diagnosis. He also said time was spent on treating her for a chest infection rather than diagnosing her condition.

We took independent advice on this complaint from one of our medical advisers, who is a GP. We found that Mrs C's case was unusual in that she had an x-ray that showed no signs of cancer only four months before having another which showed she had a fairly advanced cancer. The tumour was particularly aggressive and fast growing, and Mrs C was frail and had other illnesses. We did not find the way in which the practice cared for and treated Mrs C unreasonable.