

SPSO decision report

Case: 201502794, A Medical Practice in the Grampian NHS Board area

Sector: health

Subject: clinical treatment / diagnosis

Outcome: not upheld, no recommendations

Summary

Mr C suffered from cystic acne. He attended the practice on several occasions over a number of years and received treatment. His GP referred him for treatment from a skin specialist. The specialist prescribed him medication which cleared his acne. However, he was left with significant scarring on his face which he was reportedly told may have been prevented if he had been referred sooner. Mr C complained that, had he been prescribed the medication sooner, he would not have been so badly scarred by his acne. He considered that the practice should have referred him to the specialist earlier, or that they should have prescribed him the medication directly.

We took independent advice from a consultant dermatologist (a specialist in diseases of the skin, hair and nails). The adviser said that GPs would never prescribe this medication directly and that the correct course of action is for the GP to refer the patient to a specialist for consideration of a prescription. We found that the practice had reviewed Mr C's acne on a number of occasions and had provided treatment according to his presenting condition. His treatment was appropriately altered as required and his acne was noted to have improved at various times. We concluded that he was appropriately referred to a specialist when his acne had recurred and showed signs of scarring, so we did not uphold the complaint.