

SPSO decision report

Case: 201507734, Greater Glasgow and Clyde NHS Board - Acute Services Division

Sector: health

Subject: clinical treatment / diagnosis

Outcome: not upheld, no recommendations

Summary

Ms C, who works for an advocacy and support agency, complained on behalf of her client (Mrs A). Mrs A's husband (Mr A) underwent surgery at Glasgow Western Infirmary to repair an abdominal aortic aneurysm (a swelling of the main blood vessel that leads away from the heart which, when enlarged, can burst and cause fatal internal bleeding). Mr A's surgery was successful, however he later had to undergo a further operation to address a complication he suffered. This second surgery was also successful. Two days later Mr A had a sudden cardiac arrest and died. This was the result of a pulmonary embolism (a clot in the blood vessel that transports blood from the heart to the lungs) from a deep vein thrombosis (DVT - a blood clot in a vein). Ms C asked us to investigate Mrs A's concerns about the medical treatment that Mr A received during the original operation to repair the aneurysm and the risks of DVT.

We took independent advice from a consultant vascular surgeon and found that Mr A suffered an uncommon but recognised complication of his initial surgery, and that this had been dealt with appropriately. The adviser did not consider there to have been any unreasonable failing in the medical treatment provided. In relation to the prevention of DVT, the advice we received highlighted that there had been a reasonable assessment of risk and that preventative measures appropriate to Mr A had been taken. We did not uphold the complaint.