

SPSO decision report

Case: 201706304, Lanarkshire NHS Board
Sector: health
Subject: clinical treatment / diagnosis
Decision: not upheld, no recommendations

Summary

Mr C complained about the care and treatment provided to his late father (Mr A) at Monklands Hospital. Mr A had terminal cancer and was admitted to hospital after he developed pneumonia (a lung infection). Following admission, Mr A received an x-ray, pain medication, fluids and antibiotics, and test results indicated that he had neutropenic sepsis (a potentially fatal complication of anti- cancer treatment in which the ability of bone marrow to respond to infection is suppressed). During the admission, doctors considered whether to transfer Mr A to the Intensive Care Unit (ICU). It was felt that, due to the severity of Mr A's presenting illness as well as the background of cancer undergoing palliative treatment (end of life treatment), ICU treatment would not have altered his chance of survival. Mr A continued to receive treatment on the medical ward, and he died the day following admission to the hospital.

Mr C was unhappy that Mr A was not treated in ICU and he felt that Mr A did not receive appropriate care and treatment during the admission. We took independent advice from a consultant in acute medicine. We found that Mr A received rapid assessment and treatment on admission to the hospital and we considered that the care provided was reasonable. We also considered that the board's decision not to treat Mr A in ICU was reasonable in the circumstances. The adviser noted that specialist cancer nurses had been involved in Mr A's care and they considered that the care provided both before and after the nurses' involvement was reasonable. We did not uphold Mr C's complaint.