

SPSO decision report



Case: 202005724, Greater Glasgow and Clyde NHS Board - Acute Services Division
Sector: Health
Subject: Clinical treatment / diagnosis
Decision: upheld, recommendations

Summary

C complained that the board failed to adequately investigate and/or treat their late spouse (A)'s condition by failing to follow up their appointment at a gynaecological clinic.

A experienced abdominal pain and heavy menstrual bleeding. A's GP referred them to a gynaecology clinic. A attended the clinic and was referred for a scan. A was then discharged back into the care of their GP. A year later, A's GP referred them to gynaecology under a suspicion of cancer. A was subsequently diagnosed with endometrial cancer (a type of cancer that begins in the uterus). A was given various cancer treatments but later died.

C complained to the board about A's care and treatment. The board acknowledged that A's care was not to the standard it should have been. They accepted that the gynaecology clinic had failed to follow local treatment guidance in A's case. They apologised for this. C remained unhappy and asked us to investigate. C was concerned that the board had failed to adequately explain events.

We took independent advice from a gynaecologist. We found that the board had failed to follow their local clinical guidance in A's case. We welcomed the board's acknowledgement of this failing and their apology. However, given the significance of the failings identified we made additional recommendations for action by the board.

Recommendations

What we asked the organisation to do in this case:

- Apologise to C for the failure to follow the relevant clinical guidelines in A's case. The apology should meet the standards set out in the SPSO guidelines on apology available at www.spsos.org.uk/information-leaflets.

What we said should change to put things right in future:

- Where local guidance varies from national guidance there should be appropriate review to ensure the variation has been adequately documented and controlled and diagnostic criteria and terminology is clear and appropriate. In undertaking the review we would encourage the board to consider our comments on the simplification of the local guidance and structure of its flowchart.
- Patients with heavy menstrual bleeding should receive appropriate care and treatment in line with the relevant clinical guidance.

We have asked the organisation to provide us with evidence that they have implemented the recommendations we have made on this case by the deadline we set.