

Ectopic Pregnancy – Case Study

Our Client v Kettering General Hospital NHS Trust

Year of incident: May 2017

Date of Settlement: October 2018

Acting: Scott Haslam, Associate Solicitor at Wake Smith Solicitors

Facts:

The Claimant was a couple of months into her first pregnancy when she developed left-sided abdominal pain and vaginal bleeding. She saw her GP who was concerned about the possibility of an ectopic pregnancy (a pregnancy outside of the uterus). She was therefore referred to A&E at Kettering General Hospital.

She went directly to Kettering General Hospital. She was examined in A&E, and by the on-call gynaecologist. As her pain had reduced by the time the gynaecologist came to see her, she was diagnosed with 'bleeding in early pregnancy', reassured and told to return only if she experienced increased pain or bleeding.

Her pain settled until 3 days later, when she developed sudden and severe left-sided abdominal pain and collapsed whilst shopping at Bluewater Shopping Centre. She was taken to Darent Valley Hospital where an ultrasound scan was performed the following morning. This revealed an ectopic pregnancy within her left fallopian tube. Her left fallopian tube had ruptured due to the size of the ectopic pregnancy

Consequences:

The Claimant underwent emergency surgery to remove the ectopic pregnancy and her left fallopian tube. She was discharged home the following day but her recovery was prolonged and she experienced symptoms of anxiety and depression. She had an extended period of time off work as a result.

Expert Evidence:

Wake Smith Solicitors obtained expert evidence from an expert in Obstetrics and Gynaecology.

The expert confirmed that the Claimant should have undergone an ultrasound scan at Kettering General Hospital within 24 hours of her first presenting to A&E. This would have revealed the ectopic pregnancy before her fallopian tube had ruptured.

Surgery could have been undertaken to prevent rupture of the fallopian tube, and her subsequent collapse would have been avoided. The fallopian tube would have been removed in any event, in line with national guidelines.



Whilst no formal expert evidence was obtained from an expert in Psychology, it was argued that the Claimant's anxiety and depression would have been avoided if she had not been reassured that she had a viable pregnancy on discharged from Kettering General Hospital.

The Proceedings:

A claim for negligence was pursued on the Claimant's behalf. Wake Smith Solicitors were able to conclude the claim without the need for Court proceedings.

The matter was settled within 18 months of surgery.

Settlement:

The claim settled for a value of £10,500 plus reasonable costs.