

**Failure to refer for further investigations**  
**16HDC01694, 23 February 2018**

*Doctor ~ Medical centre ~ Breast lump ~ Monitoring ~  
Investigation ~ Professional standards ~ Right 4(1)*

A woman in her fifties consulted her regular general practitioner (GP) complaining of a lump in her right breast and a swollen and painful armpit. The GP prescribed an antibiotic and advised the woman to come back in two weeks' time if the swelling did not resolve.

The woman returned to the practice and consulted another doctor. The woman told this doctor that although not painful, her breast lump had increased in size. The doctor examined the woman and told her to monitor the breast lump, but did not refer her for further investigation.

A few months later the woman consulted her regular GP complaining of a swollen and painful right upper breast and armpit, and reporting that the lump in her breast felt a little bigger. The regular GP referred the woman for further investigation, and the woman was diagnosed with invasive breast cancer.

**Findings**

The second doctor had a responsibility to refer the woman for further investigation. By failing to do so the doctor did not provide the woman services with reasonable care and skill and breached Right 4(1).

**Recommendation**

It was recommended the doctor provide documentary evidence of having completed continuing professional development on breast cancer management.