

NEWS

Cancer researcher convicted of child pornography charges is spared erasure after showing remorse

Clare Dyer

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A histopathologist and noted cancer researcher will keep his medical registration despite a conviction for viewing child pornography on the internet. The Medical Practitioners Tribunal Service chose not to apply the usual sanction of erasure to Dana Faratian, instead suspending him for one year.

Faratian, 35, whom the MPTS panel acknowledged had “made singular contributions within the UK and beyond in relation to molecular and other laboratory analysis for the sophisticated diagnosis of cancers” lost his job at Edinburgh University and his funding from Medical Research Scotland after his conviction in October 2012.

Police seized Faratian’s home computer in December 2011 after he was detected accessing a Romanian child pornography site. They found 151 indecent images of girls aged between 6 and 14 years. Most were assessed as level one images, but two were level five, signifying the most abusive forms of child pornography.

Faratian was not jailed but was given a community payback order with three years’ supervision and required to attend a community sexual offending programme. He reported himself to the General Medical Council.

He told the hearing in Manchester, “I am not mitigating anything I have done, but in the run-up to viewing the abusive images of children, that was during a time where a lot of things had happened and I felt pretty appalling at that time.” His father had died early in 2011 and his paediatrician wife had moved to Leeds with his children. He has not seen them in two years and has a new partner.

“Your actions resulted in what was little short of a personal catastrophe for you,” said panel chairman Richard Davies. “You decided that to demonstrate your shame about your actions you would make a public and candid explanation.”

Faratian embarked on a three year programme of therapy to address “maladaptive sexual behaviour” and his psychotherapist testified that his risk of reoffending was “not currently present or relevant.” His probation officer reported his risk of reoffending as low.

Having “reflected on the possibility that you had adopted a calculated, contrived, and manipulative position deliberately designed to mislead the panel and the wider public,” said Davies, “the panel carefully considered your evidence and concluded that it was credible, candid, and reliable. It found that the disgust you felt about your offence was authentic. Your remorse was abject, and your awareness of the extent to which you had breached fundamental tenets of the profession was compelling.

“The panel took into account, but was not greatly influenced by, your undoubted and outstanding achievements as a histopathologist,” he noted.

“In the panel’s view, expunging your dishonour by the courageous application of the highest standards expected of the profession would itself buttress its reputation and substantially diminish the damage you have done to it.”

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