

## NEWS

## Trainee GP is struck off after concocting “frankly ridiculous” story to explain missing data

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BMJ

A trainee general practitioner has been struck off the UK medical register after a fitness to practise panel labelled as “incredible” her denial of falsifying questionnaires on patient satisfaction.

Olufadeke Adenike Ako, who qualified in Nigeria in 2000, was accused of filling in about 30 of the questionnaires that she was expected to provide to her educational supervisor.

She admitted having filled them in with her own hand, but she insisted that she was transcribing data from real questionnaires that she had given to patients and later brought home. The forms were kept under her bed, she claimed, and the data had been dictated into audio files by her husband and sent to her at work using the “WhatsApp” smartphone application.

But she was unable to produce the original forms, claiming that they had since been lost. Her husband told the Medical Practitioners Tribunal Service hearing that he had later deleted the audio files to make space on his smartphone, and Ako claimed that she had done the same.

The panel chairman, John Donnelly, told her that she and her husband were “unimpressive witnesses,” noting that her husband, “who is a highly qualified university legal academic and who must be used to lecturing to large groups, noticeably

tended to mumble his evidence when responding to difficult questions.”

She was also found to have compromised patient safety, having failed to check what had happened to a terminally ill patient who did not answer the door when Ako made a house call. Her supervisor told her to check the hospital browser to see if the missing patient had been admitted, but she did not do so and simply booked another doctor for a house call the next day.

However, the patient came to no harm, and neither this nor the fabricated timesheets were offences worthy of erasure, said Donnelly. Instead, Ako had compounded a retrievable error by concocting a “frankly ridiculous” story, lying on oath, and involving her husband in the deception.

“The panel cannot understand why you have persisted in this degree of dishonesty,” he said. “It was clearly wrong to fabricate the forms but had you shown insight by admitting it immediately and apologising, it is possible that those supervising you may have accepted this as an end to the matter.”

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