



## NEWS

# Junior doctor reinstated after suspension for fabricating research data

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The BMJ

A junior doctor who narrowly avoided being struck off the UK medical register after fabricating research data and citing senior colleagues as co-authors without their knowledge has been allowed to resume practice after a 12 month suspension.

Gemina Doolub, 31, was told by a medical practitioners tribunal last year that her fate had been finely balanced between erasure and the maximum suspension of 12 months. The tribunal chose the less severe option because they believed that she was unlikely to repeat the offence.<sup>1</sup>

Doolub, who qualified at Newcastle University in 2009 but is a native of Mauritius, was working at Oxford University Hospitals NHS Trust in 2013 when she submitted a paper to *ISRN Cardiology*<sup>2</sup> and a research abstract to the *Journal of the American College of Cardiology*.<sup>3</sup>

In the paper she named Erica Dall'Armellina, a clinical research fellow at John Radcliffe Hospital, as a co-author without telling her. Doolub created a false email address for Dall'Armellina to ensure that correspondence came to her. Neither Dall'Armellina nor Oxford University had approved the paper.

A month later she submitted the abstract, falsely citing Colin Forfar, a consultant cardiologist at Oxford University Hospitals, as co-author. Doolub admitted that she had falsely told the journal that the study had been double blind, and allowed the article to be published with flawed or erroneous data.

She also admitted fabricating research data for the paper and allowing it to be published with flawed, erroneous, and confidential data. Both publications were later retracted, although the abstract's retraction notice makes no mention of dishonesty or misattributed authorship. Instead it says that the results could not be replicated when analysed with newer software.

Marianne O'Kane, chairing the tribunal reviewing Doolub's case, said that there was a small but real potential for patient harm. She told Doolub that she had also "risked reputational damage to Dr Dall'Armellina, Dr Forfar, and Oxford University to enhance your reputation, career, and potential job opportunities."

The General Medical Council did not oppose Doolub's reinstatement, taking a neutral position. Doolub brought supportive witnesses and written testimony from senior colleagues including a cardiologist whose outpatient work she had been shadowing to keep her clinical skills up to date.

She also attended continuing professional development courses during her suspension, including 200 e-learning courses, and produced five reflections on her conduct, written at intervals over the past year.

"The tribunal found you to be a credible witness," O'Kane told Doolub. "It accepted your statements, set out in both your written reflections and oral evidence, that your expressions of horror, shame, and remorse for your previous actions were genuine."

- 1 Dyer C. Junior doctor is suspended for citing colleagues on falsified research without their knowledge. *BMJ* 2016;352:i1054. doi:10.1136/bmj.i105426907627
- 2 Doolub G, Dall'Armellina E. Intracoronary adenosine versus intravenous adenosine during primary PCI for ST-elevation myocardial infarction: which one offers better outcomes in terms of microvascular obstruction?[retracted]. *ISRN Cardiol* 2013;2013:248476. doi:10.1155/2013/24847623606984
- 3 Retraction notice to "Does intracoronary adenosine injection during primary PCI reduce microvascular obstruction in patients admitted with STEMI? *J Am Coll Cardiol* 2013;61(suppl A):A33.". *J Am Coll Cardiol* 2013;62:1914.

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