



## NEWS

# Consultant who oversaw FGM guidelines is struck off for possessing extreme pornography

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A consultant obstetrician who was responsible for guidelines on treating victims of female genital mutilation (FGM) has been struck off the UK medical register over the possession of extreme pornographic images.

Manish Gupta, who was an obstetrician and gynaecologist at Whipps Cross University Hospital in London, was convicted at Snaresbrook Crown Court last October of possessing pornographic images and video that show acts that were “likely to result in serious injury to anus/breasts/genitals.”

He was also found guilty of possessing one image showing an act of “intercourse/oral sex with a dead/live animal” and 14 prohibited images of children. These showed cartoon animated children, a lesser offence than possessing pornographic images of real children. He was sentenced to a 24 month community order.

Gupta, 48, who qualified at Bristol University, co-chaired the guidelines committee of the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists, and in 2015 he oversaw the writing of the college’s FGM guidelines.

A laptop with thousands of pornographic images was discovered in a cupboard in his bedroom and passed on the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, which reported him to the police. He was arrested at work in February 2017.

Gupta told the tribunal that he had suffered serious sexual abuse between the ages of five and 12 at the hands of a close family friend. This, he said, lay at the root of his later interest in extreme pornography.

Medical practitioners’ tribunals are typically held partly behind closed doors when the doctor’s health problems form part of the evidence, but unusually Gupta asked for the whole hearing to be public, and the tribunal agreed.

Gupta’s legal representative argued for a sanction of suspension. He acknowledged that his client’s fitness to practise was

impaired by the disrepute he had brought upon the profession, but said he posed no continuing risk, having voluntarily undergone psychiatric therapy and not looked at pornography for more than two years.

The General Medical Council’s representative asked for erasure. Gupta knew that he held a special position of trust in society, he argued, and would also have been aware of support services available to help him tackle his childhood abuse, yet he failed to avail himself of them before his arrest.

Rachel Wedderspoon, chairing the hearing, said that Gupta “has yet to gain much insight into his motivation for viewing pornography, and in particular the extreme pornography and prohibited images of children that have brought him before this tribunal.”

He failed to mention the distress of the women in the extreme images in his initial witness statement, she noted, only identifying them as victims when directly questioned on the point. The nature of his work as a consultant obstetrician was an aggravating factor, she said.

“The tribunal asked itself whether a reasonable and well informed patient would feel confident receiving obstetric care from Dr Gupta,” she added, “knowing of his criminal convictions, and being aware of the nature of the images he chose to view,” which the Crown Court judge had called “disgusting and depraved.”

The tribunal concluded, said Wedderspoon, “that suspension would not be an appropriate or proportionate sanction in this case, nor would it serve to uphold public confidence in the medical profession, and protect the public.”

He has 28 days to appeal before his name is erased from the medical register.