NEWS

Man is jailed for hitting emergency department doctor in the face

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A man has been jailed for six months for punching an emergency department doctor who was dealing with patients with covid-19 at a hospital in which around half the emergency department consultants and nurses have tested positive for the virus.

Gareth Rudge, 34, of no fixed address, hit the doctor in the face and head outside the emergency department at Royal Gwent Hospital in the early hours of Friday 10 April. The doctor carried on with his shift after the attack.

Police arrested Rudge at the hospital, and he was jailed at an emergency bank holiday sitting at Cardiff magistrates court on Saturday 11 April. He pleaded guilty to assault by beating of an emergency worker.

Police constable Sam Louros, the officer in the case, said, "Assaults on emergency service workers should never be tolerated. Emergency service personnel come to work to protect and help those in need, not to be assaulted." He added, "This sentence shows that incidents such as this are totally unacceptable, and there can be no excuse whatsoever for assaulting emergency workers."

Tim Robertson, a consultant in emergency medicine at the hospital, which is run by the Aneurin Bevan Health Board, revealed on Sunday that he was self-isolating at home, having tested positive for covid-19. He said that he had a fever, aches, sore throat, and lack of a sense of smell and that his son had also tested positive.

In a video on the health board's Facebook page, he said, "This has obviously happened despite all of the PPE [personal protective equipment] that we've got and all the handwashing that we're doing but it's probably just a likely thing that's going to happen when we're faced with such numbers of patients coming in with coronavirus."

He added, "We're probably up to around 50% of the consultant workforce at the Gwent in [the emergency department] who have swabbed positive for coronavirus. And a similar percent in our nursing team, which is probably inevitable. But it is proving a challenge when it comes to staffing the department, when we are facing these numbers coming through."