

News Report Activity: Case 2

Case 2: 'Stag do doctors accused of battering Spanish policeman face suspension'. (The Telegraph:2015)

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Stag do doctors accused of battering Spanish policeman face suspension

Two doctors convicted of attacking a Spanish policeman during a stag weekend are fighting to keep their jobs at a Medical Practitioners Tribunal

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Dr Oliver McConnell (Left) and Dr Deepanker Majumdar (Right) Photo: Cavendish

Two doctors convicted of attacking a Spanish policeman during a stag weekend in Barcelona are fighting to keep their jobs.

Dr Oliver McConnell and Dr Deepanker Majumdar, both 28, were arrested by police who claimed they beat a fellow officer as he shouted 'please stop, please stop'.

The incident happened when Dr Majumdar, an anaesthetics specialist, and Dr McConnell, a cardiology registrar, joined ten other men for a stag party in February last year.





• **European doctors three times more likely to be struck off: GMC**

The men visited several bars in the Catalan capital, dressed in identical yellow T-shirts emblazoned with the face of the groom-to-be. The groom however wore a woman's dress and was handcuffed to a human-sized cardboard likeness of a Liverpool FC player.

After visiting an Irish pub close to Barcelona's iconic La Rambla, the group were lined up against a wall by police. Drs McConnell and Majumdar were then detained in a police van and stripped to their underwear by officers who alleged that they had assaulted one of their number.

A police report of the incident said: "A municipal officer asked the accused to show him a package he had just bought. All of the defendants cornered the officer and hit him to the head and body while the officer shouted 'please stop, please stop'."

• **GMC probe into Mid-Staffs slammed as "whitewash" as cases abandoned**

"As a consequence, the officer suffered bruises and facial cuts which required medical first aid and took three days to heal."

Both men later pleaded guilty in a Spanish court and were given suspended jail terms. The convictions came to light in the UK seven months later when a compulsory criminal records background check was carried out on Dr Majumdar. They subsequently claimed that they had been tricked into pleading guilty when they signed a document written in Spanish.

At a Medical Practitioners Tribunal Service hearing in Manchester both doctors faced suspension but denied wrongdoing.

Dr Majumdar, who works at Nevill Hall Hospital in Abergavenny, Wales, and Dr McConnell, employed by Macclesfield District General Hospital in Cheshire, claimed they did nothing wrong during their trip.

The pair said they became separated from the rest of the stag party and were confronted by police as they left the pub.

• **Three senior doctors face GMC over Stafford Hospital scandal**

Dr Majumdar said: "When I left a policeman came up to me and ushered me towards a wall where some friends were being lined up by other gentlemen. A man told me to stand facing the wall with my hands on it. I had absolutely no idea why.

"After a while I had my pockets searched, they removed my wallet and phone and told me to turn around. We were put in a police van and we still had no idea what had happened to provoke this.

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"After a while I had my pockets searched, they removed my wallet and phone and told me to turn around. We were put in a police van and we still had no idea what had happened to provoke this.

"We were taken to a cell and asked to remove our clothing. It was scary and I didn't know what to expect. It was pretty humiliating to be stripped down to my underwear and have my clothes thrown back to me. It was more utter confusion. I didn't understand what was happening or why."

• **GMC spends £250k on private healthcare for its staff**

Dr Majumdar said he had no idea why he was being arrested until he spoke to a lawyer the following afternoon. The lawyer told him one of their group was suspected of assaulting a police officer and the Spanish police policy was to 'arrest everybody and sort it out later'.

The men claim they were never asked to give a statement or even asked for their version of events. Dr Majumdar added: "The lawyer had discussed the case with the judge and agreed to let us go providing we signed a document admitting our guilt.

"He didn't describe the offence at all to us. He said we would have to pay a fine and we would then be allowed to go home. At this point, myself and Oliver [McConnell] asked if there would be a criminal record and he said 'no, none of any kind.'"





• **GMC: record number of complaints against doctors**

When the men were produced in the courtroom after two nights in cells, they were told to sign the document and were told, through the judge's interpreter, what pleading guilty meant. "He told us to sign, said we pleaded guilty to the charge of assault, we had to pay a fine and the sentence would be eight months in prison, suspended for two years," he added.

"That was the first time prison had been mentioned. It surprised me a great deal. I accept this is something I should have raised with the GMC sooner. I wholeheartedly apologise."

Dr Majumdar's conviction revealed itself on a compulsory Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check in September last year.

He referred himself to the General Medical Council and an investigation began. Although the conviction did not show up on a DBS check on Dr McConnell, he referred himself to the GMC after discussing the case with Dr Majumdar.

• **Thousands of doctors accused of malpractice never fully checked**

Dr Majumdar said: "I find it hard to accept it was a real conviction. I thought it was some kind of scam. I couldn't explain it any other way. I was arrested without formal charge, held for two nights without being told why we were there, I wasn't allowed to call a lawyer, wasn't given access to water or daylight, wasn't treated very well at all. "And then forced, under duress, to sign a document having never given a statement or stated my view over what happened. The whole process seemed a complete farce."

Dr McConnell, whose mother is a lawyer, also denied he or Dr Majumdar had any part in the assault or were ever prone to 'bursts of violence'. He said: "It was a pretty harrowing experience. I wouldn't wish it on anybody. It's not something I want to relive. I realise we are in a privileged position as doctors and the public depend on transparency as part of that. With the benefit of hindsight I would have reported this incident immediately. "Both doctors admit the conviction and admit failing to notify the GMC immediately, but dispute the circumstances giving rise to the conviction.

The hearing was told the Spanish authorities had refused to cooperate with the GMC inquiry. The hearing continues.

