

# Doctor struck off after sexual assault allegations at Naas General Hospital

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A doctor who worked at Naas General Hospital was removed from the Irish Medical Register in 2015 after two patients alleged they were sexually assaulted by him, RTÉ Investigates has learned. The allegations related to the conduct of Dr Pathmadevan Rathnam, who was found guilty of professional misconduct by the Irish Medical Council.

Concerns around Dr Rathnam's conduct first arose in late February 2011 when Naas General Hospital received a complaint from a male minor that the doctor had inappropriately touched him in the genital area while at the hospital.

A few days later, in early March 2011, a 19-year-old male made a similar report, alleging Dr Rathnam had sexually assaulted him on six occasions. From Malaysia, Dr Rathnam graduated in medicine from the National University of Ireland in 2008.

Naas General Hospital has apologised for the way it treated two patients who alleged they were sexually assaulted by Dr Rathnam.

In a statement to RTÉ Investigates, Naas General Hospital said, on the day it received the first complaint, the hospital convened a serious incident review meeting and "decided to suspend the doctor from duty with immediate effect pending the outcome of a Trust in Care process". "The doctor has never returned to work since his suspension," the hospital noted.

The hospital added that it also notified the Irish Medical Council, HSE Child Protection Services and An Garda Síochána of the allegations in April 2011. Therefore, according to hospital records, the formal notification was made more than a month after it received the first complaint.

By that time, the then-19-year-old patient had already reported his alleged assaults to An Garda Síochána. But, before gardaí sought to question Dr Rathnam, he left Ireland. An Garda Síochána told RTÉ Investigates that the case is currently an ongoing criminal investigation and that they are cooperating with Interpol and other police authorities.

However, neither Naas General Hospital nor gardaí told the patient that Dr Rathnam had left the country and he received no update on the investigations into his case. In response, Naas Hospital said: "The lack of ongoing communication and follow up is not in line with the standard of practice nowadays... we acknowledge this was not adequate." For this, the hospital said it would like to "sincerely apologise to those involved".

Last year, RTÉ Investigates also revealed three separate investigations were underway into a series of complaints of suspected sexual abuse of unconscious patients by another doctor at Naas General Hospital.

The investigations – by the HSE, the Irish Medical Council and An Garda Síochána – related to the alleged conduct of Dr Aamir Zuberi, an anaesthetist who formerly worked at the hospital.

The allegations related to four patients, with each of the suspected incidents alleged to have occurred during 2016 and 2017 – just a year after Dr Pathmadevan Rathnam was struck off the medical register in relation to complaints of alleged sexual assault of two other young males.

**If you have been affected by any of the issues raised in this article, you can contact Dignity4Patients, whose helpline is open Monday to Thursday 10am to 4pm.**