

Doctor made 'sleazy' comments to female patients

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A fitness-to-practise inquiry by the Irish Medical Council has heard that a doctor, who is facing extradition to Hungary to complete a prison sentence for domestic violence offences, repeatedly breached High Court orders which placed conditions on his ability to practise in Ireland.

Dr Zsolt Siklósi (63) of The Walk, Hillcrest House, Roscommon, is also accused of inappropriate behaviour including taking a loan of €6,000 from a male patient in October 2017 and making inappropriate comments to a number of female patients. One patient of a clinic in Dublin complained that there was "an element of seediness" about his conduct.

The Hungarian-born doctor, who worked at various locations in Ireland including Custume Barracks in Athlone, is facing 13 allegations of failing to comply with conditions imposed in March 2017 on his registration as a GP. Dr Siklósi, who did not attend the hearing and is not legally represented, is also accused of failing to carry out proper examinations and keep proper medical records in relation to a number of patients among a total of 26 separate charges.

A senior partner in the Ridgewood Medical Centre in Swords, Co Dublin, Lucy Lynam, told the inquiry she had made a formal complaint to the Irish Medical Council about Dr Siklósi. Dr Lynam said her practice had to conduct "a damage limitation" exercise after it received several complaints from patients who had felt "a huge amount of distress and anger" about Dr Siklósi even though he had only worked in the practise for three days as a locum in April 2019.

She said female patients had described his behaviour as "inappropriate" and "sleazy" and had made them feel uncomfortable with questions about their weight and libido. She recalled that one woman had described Dr Siklósi as being "rude, dismissive, patriarchal and very inappropriate." Dr Lynam said she did not believe he had demonstrated the "decency and moral fortitude" expected of a doctor. She claimed she had originally felt reassured by Dr Siklósi's honesty in advising her before he took up the locum role that he was not allowed to prescribe psychoactive medicines.

Questioned by counsel for the IMC, Ronan Kennedy, SC, Dr Lynam admitted that he had not informed them about the vast majority of other conditions that had been imposed on his ability to practise as a GP. The inquiry heard Dr Siklósi had failed to check the pulse and blood pressure of a woman who had presented with a chest pain. He had asked her about her libido and remarked that "you should think about your husband," which the patient said was "highly inappropriate."

Dr Lynam also provided evidence that Dr Siklósi had "promised the sun, moon and stars" to another female patient by offering to give her what the witness believed was an unlicensed medicine that would "change her life." Dr Lynam said the whole incident was "bizarre" as there was no record that Dr Siklósi had carried out any examination of the patient but had steered the conversation towards arranging a private meeting if she wanted to lose weight and have a better libido.

One of the allegations is that he asked a woman an irrelevant question about her libido in front of her 10-year old son, whom he is also accused of failing to examine properly. The inquiry heard Dr Siklósi refused to remove a splinter from the arm of another female patient at the clinic and commented "it may leave a scar but you will still be beautiful." He informed the woman that he had done such a good job in removing the mole from the face of another female patient that she had given him a kiss. Dr Lynam said the patient had been quite traumatised by the consultation "and quite angry with us."

In other evidence, the chief executive of a Cork-based medical services company, Advanced Medical Service, Ed Donovan, said they had hired Dr Siklósi to work as a locum with the Defence Forces in Custume Barracks in Athlone in January 2019. Mr Donovan said his company was made aware by the Defence Forces after a few days that there

were restrictions on what medicines Dr Siklósi could prescribe but the doctor had not informed them himself about such restrictions. He said Dr Siklósi had claimed the Irish Medical Council had restricted him from prescribing psychoactive drugs because of medicines he had prescribed for his son but the condition was due to lapse after two years. Mr Donovan admitted his company had omitted to carry out its own checks on Dr Siklósi but said they were now carried out before they hired any new locum.

Dr Siklósi is also accused of failing to notify various employers about all the conditions of his registration as a GP as required by a High Court order when taking up locum work at a number of clinics including the Northgate Surgery in Drogheda, Co Louth; Surgery Skerries in Skerries, Co Dublin and the Ashfield Medical Centre in Clondalkin, Dublin.

Dr Siklósi, who has worked in Ireland since 2011, has his registration suspended by the High Court in April 2019 over breaching earlier court orders which placed restrictions on his practise. He had previously been found guilty of professional misconduct and poor professional performance in 2016 over his failure to disclose that he had been arrested on foot of a European Arrest Warrant issued by the Hungarian authorities. As a consequence of such a finding, the High Court made orders in March 2017 which attached ten conditions to his registration which included the requirement to notify the IMC of all new employment.

Dr Siklósi is the subject of an outstanding extradition application by the Hungarian authorities to serve the remaining 11 months of a one-year prison sentence for convictions relating to domestic violence directed at his former wife, his child and mother-in-law in 2005.

He had served one month in prison with the remainder suspended but it was reactivated after he was convicted in December 2010 of failing to pay child support. As a result, the Hungarian authorities applied to have him returned from Ireland to serve the remainder of his sentence.

Although the High Court approved the execution of the warrant, the extradition of Dr Siklósi has been put on hold after he appealed the ruling to the Court of Appeal which referred the case to the Court of Justice of the EU for clarification on legal issues.

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.