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PRESS RELEASE

DISCIPLINARY INQUIRY FOR DR SINGH TREGON RANDHAWA

1. A Disciplinary Committee (DC) Inquiry ("Inquiry") was held for Dr Singh Tregon Randhawa ("Dr Singh"), age 32 years. The proceedings arose from a complaint dated 17 August 2009 by the KK Women's and Children's Hospital ("KK Hospital") to the Singapore Medical Council ("SMC"). At the time of the complaint, Dr Singh was employed and practised as a Medical Officer at KK Hospital, which is part of the SingHealth Group.
2. Dr Singh initially faced 80 charges. 3 of the charges related to one patient and the remaining related to another patient.
3. The 80 charges against Dr Singh was that:
 - (a) he knowingly and intentionally accessed and read the Electronic Medical Records (or "EMR") of the patients concerned on the occasions stated in the charges;
 - (b) the patients were not under his clinical care and management;
 - (c) he did not obtain the patients' consents;
 - (d) he had violated the patients' confidentiality; and
 - (e) he had violated the SingHealth Group's IT Security Policy.
4. At the start of the hearing before the DC, Dr Singh pleaded guilty to 6 charges of professional misconduct. The DC accepted Dr Singh's plea of guilt and accordingly convicted of the 6 charges. In addition, the SMC and Dr Singh gave consent for 74 similar charges to be taken into consideration by the DC for the purposes of sentencing.

5. In arriving at its decision on the appropriate sentence to be given, the DC noted the following :-
- (a) There was nothing pressing during the material time that necessitated Dr Singh to look at the first patient's records.
 - (b) With regard to the second patient, while Dr Singh had, in his mitigation, stated that he was under tremendous pressure from the troubling and distressing behaviour of the patient when he accessed the patient's EMR and he had did so out of fear and a need to minimize contact with the patient, it cannot be denied that Dr Singh did it knowingly and in violation of his duties as a medical practitioner.
 - (c) It is a cornerstone of the ethics of the medical profession that the privacy of patients is maintained at all times; patients therefore have an implicit trust and belief that doctors will not disclose their medical records to third parties without their consent. To breach this rule is to violate the trust reposed in doctors by members of the public.
 - (d) The present case is the first of its kind and the DC has to decide, given the unique facts of this case, the appropriate sentence to be meted out.
 - (e) Ordinarily, if a doctor accessed the EMR of a patient who is not under his care or clinical management, he ought to be visited with a punishment of suspension or striking off. This is if he acted out of malice or for profit, depending on the circumstances of the case.
 - (f) In making its orders for this case, the DC is not seeking to create a benchmark sentence or precedent for future cases where similar charges are brought.
6. The DC also considered Dr Singh's mitigating factors, including the following :-

- (a) Dr Singh is a young doctor with a promising medical career ahead of him and that save for these instances of misconduct, his record is exemplary;
 - (b) Dr Singh has taken responsibility for his conduct from the first instance it was brought to his attention by his employers and had pleaded guilty thereby saving the DC much time; and
 - (c) Dr Singh was not motivated by malice towards the patients when he accessed their EMRs. The DC noted that Dr Singh did it out of a sense of desperation and self protection and when he did the acts, he had lost his sense of reason and forgot his duty and obligations to patients of KK Hospital.
7. In the circumstances, taking the evidence and mitigating factors into consideration, the DC ordered that Dr Singh:
- (a) be fined the sum of **\$10,000**;
 - (b) be censured;
 - (c) give a written undertaking to the Medical Council that he will not engage in the conduct complained of or any similar conduct; and
 - (d) pay the costs and expenses of and incidental to these proceedings, including the costs of the solicitor to the Singapore Medical Council and the Legal Assessor.
8. The DC also ordered that its Grounds of Decision be published.

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