

# Docs lose licence for operating wrong foot, trying to cover up

**TREATED** The two doctors will not be able to practise anywhere in the country with their medical licences cancelled for six months

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**NEW DELHI:** Two doctors have been struck off Delhi's state medical register for six months for operating on the wrong foot of a patient and then fudging hospital records to cover up their negligence.

With their medical licences suspended, orthopaedic surgeons Dr Ashwini Maichand and Rahul Kakran cannot practice medicine anywhere in the country for six months.

The disciplinary committee of the Delhi Medical Council (DMC) found the doctors negligent for operating on 24-year-old Ravi Rai's left ankle instead of the right one that needed a surgery at Fortis, Shalimar Bagh.

He was taken to the hospital after taking a fall from a staircase on June 19.

When Rai woke up after the surgery with his left leg plastered instead of the right on June 21, he sent a photograph of his foot to his parents from the recovery room.

"We immediately contacted the surgeons who conducted the surgery. They just apologised and said that it happened by mistake. And reassured us that it was a simple procedure and they would just have to remove the screws from the left leg and put it in the right one," said his father Ramkaran Rai.

The hospital sacked the doc-

tors after an internal inquiry confirmed negligence.

"After the names of the doctors are removed from the state medical register, they will not be eligible to practise medicine in Delhi or anywhere else in the country," said Dr Girish Tyagi, member, DMC.

There have been only two or three instances in which a Delhi doctor's name has been struck off from the medical register for six months, he said.

On being questioned by the disciplinary committee, the doctors said that they planned to operate on the less swollen left leg, as the right was too swollen to operate upon. However, the committee found enough evidence to suggest otherwise.

"The doctor on questioning informed that weight bearing would be allowed on the left side with doubtful hairline fracture after eight weeks whether the surgery is performed or not. This statement contradicts the advantage of early surgery in an undisplaced fracture on the basis of which it (surgery on the left leg) has been claimed to have been performed," the order read.

The injured area only in the right leg was marked before the surgery, however, in the checklist the doctors have ticked that there were markings on the left leg as well. "This appears to be due to tampering of the case records and marking it later,

because if it had been marked pre-operatively then as per the checklist consent for the surgery on the left should have been taken," the order said.

The inquiry committee also noted instances of words being struck off in the hospital records, "which could be attempted tampering of records," it said.

The doctor's prescribed Laser Interferential Therapy for pain management in the left foot. "The treatment should never be given in a fracture that needs surgery. They had no intentions of any plan surgery," the order said.

Another instance of negligence on part of the doctors was that they did not communicate the suspicion of a spine fracture to the anaesthetist who used a spinal anaesthesia.

"The same should have been avoided especially when the patient had suspicion of spine fracture," the committee observed.

The doctors did not tell the physiotherapist about the fractures, allowing her to put weight on Ravi Rai's left lower limb and make him stand on the fractured foot.

Fortis Hospital administration refused to comment saying the two doctors had been sacked after the negligence. "Not interested. Thank you," said Dr Maichand.

Kakran could not be reached for a comment.



■ Ravi Rai takes his father's help to move. RAJ K RAJ/HT FILE PHOTO

## RAISING ISSUES

HT had in a three-part series highlighted how negligence on the part of doctors/hospitals troubled patients.

