

HPCSA suspends paediatric surgeon Peter Beale

The Health Professions Council of South Africa (HPCSA) has suspended Dr Peter Beale, the paediatric surgeon facing charges of culpable homicide after 10-year-old Zayyaan Sayed died shortly after Beale performed a routine laparoscopic surgery in October.



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Anaesthetist Dr Abdulhay Munshi is facing similar charges for his involvement in the surgery. Beale and Munshi appeared in the Johannesburg Magistrate's Court on Tuesday morning, 17 December, where they were each granted bail of R10,000.

Suspension

The HPCSA said it received information relating to alleged unprofessional conduct on the part of Professor PG Beale in October 2019. Having received such allegations, the HPCSA conducted formal investigations in terms of Section 41A of the Health Professions Act, 1974. The investigation into the allegations has been concluded. Due to the seriousness of the complaints received, the HPCSA instituted a suspension hearing against Professor Beale.

On 10 December 2019, the Ad Hoc Committee of the Medical and Dental Professional Board ordered that the registration of Professor Beale be suspended with immediate effect from the HPCSA register as a paediatric surgeon in terms of Section 15B(1) (a), pending the adjudication by the Professional Conduct Committee in terms of Chapter (iv) of the Health Professions Act, 1974.

The HPCSA does not have any legislative mandate to conduct criminal investigations, therefore, the current criminal investigations including the arrests of health practitioners falls outside its jurisdiction. The HPCSA as a regulatory body for health practitioners is of the view that any allegations of unprofessional conduct against any of its registered health practitioners should be dealt with in accordance with its ethical rules, norms and standards for practice as well as applicable ethical codes of conduct e.g. the Hippocratic Oath as amended from time to time instead of being dealt with in terms of the criminal justice system.

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