

Two doctors charged with causing burns to anaesthetised patient

Duo deny negligence leading to injuries during weight loss procedure

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Dubai: Two doctors strongly denied in court yesterday the charge of professional negligence that led to a woman suffering burns to her arm and hair while undergoing a gastric banding procedure.

Prosecutors accused the Iranian doctors, a surgeon and an anaesthetic specialist, with professional misconduct and inattentiveness that left the Egyptian patient, 31, with burns to her head and left arm while she was completely anaesthetised in the operation room of a Dubai-based hospital for the weight loss surgery.

"I am not guilty... we did not commit any professional misconduct. We didn't do anything wrong," the 56-year-old surgeon argued when he defended himself before the Dubai Misdemeanour Court yesterday.

The 40-year-old anaesthetic specialist also pleaded his innocence before Presiding Judge Ebrahim Khalil Abu Shamma in courtroom seven. "I as well didn't commit anything wrong. I didn't cause her any injury."

According to the charge sheet, prosecutors charged the defendants with professional misconduct and failing to adhere to their profession's safety and precautionary guidelines. Prosecution records said the woman suffered burns to her hair, scalp and left arm.

The suspects denied the prosecutors' claims and asked Presiding Judge Abu Shamma to adjourn the case until they were able to produce defence witnesses.

Court records showed that prosecutors had initially dismissed the case against the doctors after a Dubai Department of Health and Medical Services-assigned investigative committee concluded that there was no malpractice and no negligence. The woman testified before the police that she agreed with the surgeon to undergo a gastric banding surgery in the hospital. She claimed that following the surgery she suffered various diseases and underwent several operations.

Police summoned the surgeon for questioning and the latter denied committing any medical malpractice.

Prosecution records said the woman contested the prosecutors' decision to dismiss the case and lodged a new petition to prosecutors to reconsider her case.

Thereafter police referred the doctors to the prosecution on charges of causing injuries to the woman.

The claimant testified before prosecutors that, following the surgery, she was left with a 25-cm incision mark from the top of her chest down till her stomach, three 3.5-cm marks on her stomach and a 1-cm cut near her lung.

Defendants' argument

"I was admitted to the operation room with normal hair but after the operation I went out with burns in my head and hair. The doctor was [allegedly] responsible for what happened. A nurse checked my hair before the operation and I did not have any clips on it. I deny what was mentioned in the committee's report that my hair burnt because I had clips on," she alleged.

The trial reconvenes on January 25.

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