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N.Y. pediatrician faces new sex abuse, fraud charges

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By [Jonathan Allen](#)

NEW YORK (Reuters) - A New York pediatrician is facing federal charges of sexually abusing his young female patients by photographing and filming them naked in the privacy of his clinic and then filing fraudulent insurance claims in their name, prosecutors said on Wednesday.

Evidence in the case against Dr. Rakesh Punn, 53, includes a "how-to" guide on molestation he was writing on his computer which incorporated passages from the Kama Sutra, the ancient Indian sex treatise, prosecutors said.

Punn was originally arrested in July 2010 at his home in Bethpage on New York's Long Island by Nassau County police, and was charged last year by the district attorney of sexually abusing girls as young as 11 that had been sent to him for medical care, sometimes drugging them before filming and photographing them. He has pleaded not guilty to those charges.

In addition to the local charges, Punn now faces an additional 36 federal charges involving the sexual exploitation of children and health care fraud. He was arraigned on Wednesday, according to Loretta Lynch, the United States Attorney for the Eastern District of New York.

"As alleged in the indictment, the defendant not only violated the criminal law, he also betrayed his oath as a licensed physician, to first, do no harm," Lynch said. "These children were entrusted to the defendant by their parents for health care and what they allegedly received was sexual abuse."

The federal charges focus on the suspected abuse of three young female patients between September 2007 and January 2008. Prosecutors say naked photographs and videos of the girls were found on Punn's computer.

If convicted, Punn faces a minimum of 15 years in prison and a maximum of 30 years for each count of sexual exploitation of a child, and a maximum sentence of 10 years' imprisonment for each count of health care fraud, prosecutors said.

Punn's next date in court in connection with the local charges is January 18, a spokesman for the Nassau County District Attorney said, adding that the federal case was likely to proceed once the district attorney's case had been resolved.

Punn has been in jail since his 2010 arrest with his bail set at \$5 million, prosecutors said.

An attorney for Punn did not respond to a request for comment on Wednesday.

(Reporting By Cynthia Johnston. Editing by Peter Bohan)

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