

Prosecutors: Bethpage Pediatrician Sexually Abused, Videotaped Young Girls

June 29, 2011 12:14 PM/ CBS New York



(credit: Nassau County District Attorney's Office/Handout)

MINEOLA, N.Y. (CBSNewYork/AP) – A Bethpage pediatrician previously charged with secretly videotaping young female patients has been indicted on charges that he sexually abused and assaulted some of them. Prosecutors say victims were as young as 11.

The 60-count indictment charges Dr. Rakesh Punn, 53, with criminal sale of a prescription for a controlled substance, assault, sexual abuse, promoting a sexual performance, possessing a sexual performance by a child, unlawful surveillance, fraudulently obtaining a signature, and criminal possession of a forged instrument.

He is expected to be arraigned July 11.

“This defendant as a doctor in the community of long-standing was revered, he was almost God-like,” Nassau County District Attorney Kathleen Rice told 1010 WINS. “He would not allow parents in the room with the children and because they had such a level of trust with him they allowed the child to go into the examination room just with the doctor”

Punn also is accused of running a prescription scam for obtaining chloral hydrate, a controlled substance that he then allegedly kept for himself.

A search of his home revealed a large amount of cash and a forged international driver's license with his photo, but a false name and birth date. “This trusted pediatrician turned his office into a house of horrors for many young girls,” Rice said.

Punn has been in jail on \$3.5 million bail since he was first arrested in July 2010, charged with secretly videotaping girls while they were naked in his office.

His attorney has previously said Punn is innocent of the videotaping accusations.

Prosecutors said Punn covered the girls' eyes with gauze and a blindfold and then assaulted them. In many instances, Punn would give the girls a sedative to render them unconscious.

Other times, Punn would have the girls stand in his office and expose their breasts while a small digital camera hidden among objects on his desk recorded video, prosecutors said. Punn allegedly told the girls these "procedures" were medically necessary examinations.

Authorities are still investigating and have asked other possible victims to come forward.

If convicted of the charges, what do you think is the appropriate punishment? Sound off below...

(TM and Copyright 2011 CBS Radio Inc. and its relevant subsidiaries. CBS RADIO and EYE Logo TM and Copyright 2011 CBS Broadcasting Inc. Used under license. All Rights Reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten, or redistributed. The Associated Press contributed to this report.)