



Practitioner sex abuse: occurrence, prevention and disciplinary sanction

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Résumé en anglais	<p>Studies put forward figures for male practitioner sex abuse of around ten per cent. This practice, which is contrary to medical ethics, is highly reprehensible in ethical terms. The assaults range from uninvited meddling in patients' sexual lives to proven rape and inappropriate touching. The majority of this type of abuse is perpetrated by psychiatrists, but in more recent times a growing number of cases have been uncovered involving general practitioners or obstetric gynaecologists. For the most part, the abusers are men, aged between 45 and 64, who are insufficiently trained in terms of the "practitioner-patient" relationship, or who are suffering from a mental pathology or who are in a situation of personal or professional crisis. Raising awareness of this issue is the driving force behind the implementation of prevention strategies, based on initial and ongoing training for practitioners in France, whistle-blowing on fellow practitioners in the United States and professional help in Canada. Disciplinary sanctions are more severe than those given within the framework of non-sexual misconduct in the United States. In France, the Order of Practitioners does not appear to be taking its role of defending patients seriously, since it seldom issues anything more substantial than minor penalties.</p>
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