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News

Patients' group to publish names of negligent doctors

Xavier Bosch, Barcelona

The Spanish patients' association El Defensor del Paciente (Adepa), has announced that it plans to publish on its website a list of doctors who have been found guilty of medical negligence by Spain's Supreme Court.

The announcement prompted an immediate warning from the Agency for Data Protection that publishing such a list could lead to a fine of up to 100 million pesetas (£380 000; \$570 000).

Carmen Flores, president of the association, said that her organisation would go ahead, despite the warning. It would publish the names of the doctors along with the entire text of the judgment.

She also announced that the association's bulletin was going to publish pictures of the results of plastic surgery. The association would not comment on the results but would "leave the evaluation to the people who look at the photos," she said.

Ms Flores said that the association's aim in publishing the list of negligent doctors was to provide information for patients before they took the decision to put themselves in someone's hands.

The association's lawyer, Carlos Sardinero, added: "The medical profession is not fairly punished [in Spain] when found guilty of negligence since in most instances, the doctor is suspended for only two months and has to pay a ... fine which will be covered by a medical insurance company."

The association is going to await the final decision of the Agency for Data Protection, and if that is negative it will appeal to public opinion for support.

The patients' association has been criticised by several medical organisations. The Spanish Organisation of Medical Colleges said that if it went ahead with its plan to publish, it did not rule out the possibility of suing.

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