

## **31 doctors, including 2 from Mumbai, get show-cause notices for illegal gender determination**

**By Sumitra Deb Roy, The Times of India**

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MUMBAI: The Maharashtra Medical Council (MMC) has served show-cause notices on 31 doctors across the state, including two from Mumbai, for flouting norms pertaining to illegal gender determination of fetuses.

The notices were served after the state's public health department found them flouting the Pre-Conception and Prenatal Diagnostics Techniques (PCPNDT) Act over a period of time. The doctors' names were withheld by the MMC, which insisted they would be made public only after the gravity of their offence was established. The doctors could be penalized for something as grave as performing sex determination or female feticide, to lesser offences like incomplete paperwork or credentials of the patients.

MMC member Dr Shivkumar Utture said the public health department through sting operations and stringent monitoring found out about the doctors. "The notices have been sent over the past few weeks. We have given the doctors 15 days, after which if they fail to reply, we will initiate steps to suspend their licenses," he said. Utture said the doctors could be let off with a warning depending on the severity of their offence. "In cases where the offence is serious, their licences will be suspended," he said. The license for a first-time offence is suspended for five years, while for a repeater it is cancelled.

MMC has also initiated steps to suspend licenses of four doctors, two from Beed, for involvement in sex determination.

"Four are on the verge of losing their licenses. They have been found indulging in the illegal activity by a sting operation," said MMC president Dr Kishor Taori. He said the body will come down heavily on doctors found guilty of violating the PCPNDT Act.

Taori said that powers of the quasi-judicial body were restricted to suspension of licenses. "Beyond this, our powers are limited. The civil surgeons' office has to take over from there. The monitoring of whether these doctors are still practising without a license has to be done by the state," he said.

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