

NHS consultant suspended from working for EIGHT YEARS for daring to speak out about high death rates

By [Daily Mail Reporter](#)

Last updated at 11:13 AM on 14th May 2010

A leading heart consultant who blew the whistle on high death rates at his hospital has been banned from working for eight years - at a cost of £6million to the NHS.

Dr Raj Mattu was suspended in 2002 after he blew the whistle on dangerous clinical practices and high death rates at Walsgrave Hospital in Coventry.

The top practitioner was stopped from working and hauled before a High Court judge, the General Medical Council and now, when found innocent of all charges, is being disciplined for asking for his old job back.

Hospital bosses have reportedly spent as much as £6million blocking his return.

Almost a decade after he first spoke out, the hospital has been found to have one of the highest death rates in the country.



Suspension: The NHS has spent more than £6million keeping Dr Raj Mattu from working at University Hospital in Coventry, formerly known as the Walsgrave Hospital, since 2002

Yet he is battling to resume his career as a cardiologist.

Last night, the defeated Labour Government stood accused of repeatedly breaking their 1997 election promise to protect doctors and nurses who spoke out to protect patients.

Dr Mattu's supporters claim Labour health ministers were aware of his situation, but refused to intervene.

Hospital bosses suspended high-flying specialist Dr Mattu on allegations of bullying a junior doctor.

But the 48-year-old, who was found innocent in a £500,000 independent inquiry, was still not allowed to return to his job - even though a High Court judge ruled he should go back to work.

After the QC-led independent inquiry, University Hospitals Coventry and Warwickshire then reported Dr Mattu to the GMC, which also rejected the charges.

He was told he could return last year and began 18 months of retraining.

But now he has been told by hospital bosses that he will face further allegations at a new disciplinary hearing.

Dr Mattu, who was hired to raise standards in cardiology at the hospital, is being disciplined for asking for his old job back - which included pioneering heart research.

He has been forced to abandon his refresher training at two leading London hospitals by the hospital trust, which had organised the course.

Dr Mattu, who earned £110,000 as a specialist, last night said the saga has destroyed his career.

'This has taken an enormous toll on me psychologically,' he said. 'To have been barred from doing the job I love for eight years has been a tremendous blow.

'I never believed that this could go on for so long. I have been hung out to dry by the hospital and I have had no backing or support from the Department of Health.

'Labour was pledged to protect people like me who spoke out on behalf of patients but I've been badly let down. Now that the trust has started new disciplinary action I have no idea where this will end.

'It's an absolute nightmare. I thought when they finally agreed that I could go back to work that it was all over. But the hospital is continuing to persecute me.

'It has had a terrible effect on my mental and physical health and affected my relationships with family.'

Ted Needham, a research scientist who worked with the doctor, said: 'Dr Mattu has not done anything wrong clinically. His only crime was to speak up on behalf of patients and report things he saw were wrong that were costing lives.'

He added: 'He has been left in limbo. Without retraining he can't go back to work. It's the same as being suspended. He can't organise his own retraining. That has to be sponsored by the trust.

'He has every right in law to go back to his old job which involved treating patients and doing vital heart research. But they want to take away his research work and he quite rightly wants to carry on.

'It is almost unbelievable that someone could be kept from their job for eight years and yet the Labour Party health team in Whitehall chose to ignore his plight and allow his persecution to continue. His friends and supporters were shocked by Labour's indifference to his plight.'

Norman Lamb, Liberal Democrat health spokesman until the election, said: 'It is frankly scandalous that a hospital consultant can be kept away from his job for eight when he is completely innocent of any offence.

'Labour's Health Secretary, Andy Burnham really should have intervened and told Dr Mattu's trust that it could not carry on in this way.

'If Dr Mattu is innocent then he should be allowed to carry on with his retraining. You cannot discipline someone simply because they ask to return to their old job.'

Department of Health guidelines state that long term suspensions should be avoided and suspensions should be dealt with speedily within six months.

Hospitals are also directed to avoid suspensions for non clinical reasons.

Tory Peter Bone, a member of the House of Commons Health Select Committee until the General Election, said: 'It is outrageous that a doctor can be kept away from his job for so long without good cause.

'What on earth is going on for the Department of Health to allow a hospital trust to behave in this way?'

A former colleague of Dr Mattu said: 'We had terrible death rates here according to the national statistics and Raj was brave enough to point out where mistakes were being made.'

Walsgrave Hospital is one of 25 hospitals singled out in a report by Professor Brian Jarman for having higher than average death rates.

He urged that all the hospitals should be subject to immediate investigation by the Care Quality Commission.

A University Hospitals Coventry and Warwickshire NHS Trust spokesman said: 'We are aware of the information being put into the public domain by Dr Mattu's supporters. Much of the information being published is, in our view, inaccurate and misleading.

'We have however, being a responsible employer, made a commitment to keep matters between any of our employees and ourselves strictly confidential.'

Comments (35)

- [Newest](#)

- [Oldest](#)
- [Best rated](#)
- [Worst rated](#)

[View newest 6](#)

Hospital bosses..... WHO exactly. Name them, shame them and make them disappear. It is precisely people like this that have shaped our society...but the worm is turning. These politically correct politically appointed cretins must be culled. Off with their heads. We must fight for a culture of openness, and transparency.

- A.H., Loughton, England, 14/5/2010 13:01

Click to rate __ Rating 251

[Report abuse](#)

Dave should look into this.

- Dino Fancellu, Epsom, Surrey, 14/5/2010 12:58

Click to rate __ Rating 167

[Report abuse](#)

Reminds me of the story of the Austrian doctor who decided to wash his hands in-between delivering babies in the 1800s, cutting mother mortality rates from 50% to 2%. He was fired from 3 different hospitals, sent to a mental institute and murdered by a patient in there. Just for speaking out and trying to improve death rates. 200 years later, it's happening in the UK...

- Matt, Johannesburg, South Africa, 14/5/2010 12:51

Click to rate __ Rating 206

[Report abuse](#)

Isn't it disgusting that the trust has spent so much money trying to prevent this honourable doctor from working when they should have spent the money on improving their standard of care. Pretty typical of the way Labour worked, but hopefully things will change for the better.

Dr Mattu should consider working for a different trust. Best wishes.

- Andrew, Planet politician, 14/5/2010 12:46

Click to rate __ Rating 192

[Report abuse](#)

This shows how pernicious authority can be, even in a democracy.

- A Disgruntled Elector, Blighted Blighty, 14/5/2010 12:40

Click to rate __ Rating 173

[Report abuse](#)

Yet another whistleblower is on the rack for daring to speak out!! It's the hospital CEO's, managers, under managers, assistant managers, deputy assistant managers - I could go on and on and on and on.. who need to be sacked. We do not need so many levels of administration - a chimpanzee can do their job - but good clinicians like Dr Raj Mattu are indispensable!!

When a patient is rushed into hospital he needs a doctor not a paper shuffler!

Morale is low in most hospitals because there are far too many administrators and not enough doctors and nurses.

- Anne, North Yorkshire, 14/5/2010 12:38

Click to rate __ Rating 233

[Report abuse](#)

Yet another whistleblower is on the rack for daring to speak out!! It's the hospital CEO's, managers, under managers, assistant managers, deputy assistant managers - I could go on and on and on and on.. who need to be sacked. We do not need so many levels of administration - a chimpanzee can do their job - but good clinicians like Dr Raj Mattu are indispensable!!

When a patient is rushed into hospital he needs a doctor not a paper shuffler!

Morale is low in most hospitals because there are far too many administrators and not enough doctors and nurses.

- Anne, North Yorkshire, 14/5/2010 12:38

Click to rate Rating 26

[Report abuse](#)

Has he a case to take those barring his re-employment to civil court and sue them as individuals jointly and severally for damages and back pay etc.? Or a 'mandarin' in Whitehall who may have been deliberately blocking him? It happened in another discipline to my grandfather who never got what was due him and the vile wretch who caused the misery got away scot-free, shameful.

- S A Longden, Fakenham, Norfolk, 14/5/2010 12:34

Click to rate Rating 26

[Report abuse](#)

I used to work for the NHS, and was warned about confidentiality in my innocence I thought this meant not divulging patient information to anyone bar the patient themselves or direct family members, which I thoroughly agreed with. Where I had the problem was not being allowed to say that someone hadn't eaten any lunch/ dinner, or had not been washed until late morning due to staff shortages as this was a breach of confidentiality and our jobs were at risk for speaking out and telling families the truth.

Doctors and Nurses need a confidential independent number they can call to voice concerns those manned by union members are no good- their hands are also tied although they do their best.

- Faye, Glasgow, Scotland, 14/5/2010 12:21

Click to rate Rating 36

[Report abuse](#)

An earlier poster comments that "there are procedures to be followed." Indeed there are, and the admonition that "failure to [do x] will result in delay" is fairly common in instructions, as is proper in any bureaucracy. However, there is a fundamental difference between 'delay' and 'stubborn resistance.' I, too, wonder WHY this doctor was 'forced to abandon his retraining' and what new 'allegations' he faces in additional 'discipline' procedures. I also imagine the charge of "bullying a junior physician" likely has some merit, and is unrelated to the prior concern.

Nevertheless, the NIH says that 'suspensions should be dealt with speedily within 6 months.' Perhaps a 'delay' means that the doctor's suspension might last 9 months, or a year. Certainly not 8.

- NikFlorida, Rock Hill, SC USA, 14/5/2010 12:15

Click to rate Rating 23

[Report abuse](#)

University Hospitals Coventry and Warwickshire Trust is obviously run by little spiteful people with too much taxpayers money to spend to justify their treatment of Dr Mattu.

If anything, there should be an urgent inquiry into this trust and those responsible for this disgraceful affair (and the high death rate) should be removed from their posts and barred from working in any NHS trust in the future.

- Mowdiwarp, Huddersfield, 14/5/2010 12:08

Click to rate Rating 33

[Report abuse](#)

An earlier poster attempts to deflect blame to the BMA. Let's be clear, of course the BMA (or any professional organization) works to protect its own, and, like defense attorneys, they know that the best interests of their clients are usually served by slowing things down a bit. That's why a professional sports team is often encouraged to call a "time out" to break the momentum of their opposition. But nevertheless, it is no secret that bureaucracy (especially those labour folk) strongly believe that if the system fails, the flaw is with its input, not the system itself. Bureaucracies are static, not dynamic, so the whole "it's not a bug, it's a feature!" mentality prevails here. And since any entity's first objective is to preserve and perpetuate itself, of course the hospital fought to resist change. There's quite a life lesson in here, if people will only look for it.

- NikFlorida, Rock Hill, SC USA, 14/5/2010 12:08

Click to rate Rating 25

[Report abuse](#)

Reinstate Dr Mattu. Suspending him is a waste. He needs to be back in work helping sick patients. This was why he studied medicine. He is right the patient death rate is far too high. He is a good and honest man and I support him 200%.

- Kazelle, Norfolk, 14/5/2010 11:53

Click to rate Rating 31

[Report abuse](#)

Disgraceful behaviour from the moronic admin side of the NHS, just typical of what Liebour has allowed to happen over the last 13years. This should never have happened, they should be fired and replaced - there are plenty of good people out there and the good doctor reinstated in his original role.

Get real ! Hopefully this sort of thing will be on the decline from now on!

- maria, london, 14/5/2010 11:46

Click to rate Rating 25

[Report abuse](#)

Dr Mattu should emigrate. There are plenty of places crying out for cardiologists. Virtually any African country would welcome him with open arms, not to mention various islands, India, Australia etc. His difficulties here in the UK don't look like they will be resolved any time soon.

Go where you will be appreciated, doc.

- Sue, Hawkinge, 14/5/2010 11:46

Click to rate Rating 26

[Report abuse](#)

Smells fishy doesn't it? The NHS does not like being told it could do better by its own staff.

- sandra, alicante+spain, 14/5/2010 11:46

Click to rate Rating 34

[Report abuse](#)

Whistleblowers like this doctor are not only supposed to be protected from retaliation by their employers, they're supposed to be REWARDED by the government agencies they rat them out to.

The NHS bosses who deliberately destroyed his career out of vindictiveness should be sacked, with no farewell package, no pension, and the cardiologist should be reinstated with back pay. The monies can come from those who kept him from returning.

Disgusting. How on earth are doctors, nurses, etc supposed to feel free to come forward in order to protect patients if this is how we treat them?! WE need more people willing to speak up, not less!

- anon, uk, 14/5/2010 11:42

Click to rate Rating 28

[Report abuse](#)

confidential that's right you simply do not like being either told the truth or beaten by a man who knows the truth shame on you and shame on you for wasting so much public money this makes me sick when people are dying and denied drugs. you should all be sacked immediately and replaced and I hope they do poor man.

- colin, huddersfield, 14/5/2010 11:39

Click to rate Rating 23

[Report abuse](#)

An axe has to fall on the people responsible for this terrible situation. In addition, financial retribution should be sought via a significant reduction in the salaries and pensions of the people responsible who no doubt have already received significant financial rewards for their apparant incompetence.

- G Robinson, Surrey, Yorkshire and the Lakes, 14/5/2010 11:37

Click to rate __ Rating 24

[Report abuse](#)

This is my local hospital and this issue has been going on for as long as i can remember... There is a culture at the director level of keep your mouth shut or get lost... Its the directors that should be sacked...

- H, COV, 14/5/2010 11:36

Click to rate __ Rating 36

[Report abuse](#)

Welcome to 'stasi' Britain

.....and most people in the UK are still deluded into thinking they live in a country that values 'freedom' and liberty and freedom of speech etc etc.

Come on - how much has to happen in this ONCE great nation of ours before people WAKE UP!

The current selection of politicians and political parties all have the same agenda - the destruction of Christian Britain.

- Andy, Lincs, 14/5/2010 11:35

Click to rate __ Rating 22

[Report abuse](#)

I am not surprised this doctor has been victimised. The NHS upper echelon and management seem to be a bunch of spiteful, self-seeking individuals, who are only interested in preserving their own status and exhorbitant salaries and to hell with the unfortunate patients who dare to become sick enough to need the services of their filthy, understaffed, unpleasant hospitals. I think they should be made to reimburse the NHS the £6million it has apparently cost to keep this man out - reinstate him immediately and give him the job of cleaning up the hospital, its wards and its staff. Wonder why they changed the name, did they think the word University gave it added status? It's the standard of service which counts, not the name. By the way, did you know that Labours vaunted Patients Charter was ditched in 2001, giving way to a 'What you can expect from your NHS', which in turn has quietly disappeared. We, the patients now have no rights and I hope the new government will act on this.

- Helen, Gosport, 14/5/2010 11:35

Click to rate __ Rating 35

[Report abuse](#)

This is appalling - whistleblowers, when they are highlighting a problem, should be protected. Time to look at the management team at the hospital.

- CJ, UK, 14/5/2010 11:30

Click to rate __ Rating 27

[Report abuse](#)

Doctors do well at burying their mistakes but hopefully Dr. Mattu is the key to opening yet another seriously flawed can of worms.

Being treated in hospital makes one feel so vulnerable that it is hardly the time to complain about being surrounded by non-English speaking immigrants.

This new government could save a fortune by eliminating the 'do-nothing but winge' politicians, halve the public non-producing services and put genuine benefit spongers out to work, i.e. guarding and cleaning the underground and London's streets, however, don't forget the contract clause, 'this work could prove to be very, very, very dangerous'.

- ex-Londoner, Heidelberg, 14/5/2010 11:21

Click to rate __ Rating 72

[Report abuse](#)

Whilst on the face of it this appears ridiculous, I feel very sure that if all of the facts and details were known it would make very different reading. I am not saying it is right or ideal but there are procedures to be followed and in my experience the biggest delays are usually caused by the BMA. They will do anything to postpone things and drag them out and dont have a commercial bone in their body. Their view is that their members is on full pay and the longer that continues - the better.

- Jane, Swansea, 14/5/2010 11:20

Click to rate __ Rating 64

[Report abuse](#)

The Health Secretary must FIRE ALL OF THOSE RESPONSIBLE FOR BLOCKING THE RETURN OF THIS WHISTELBLOWER. The Marxist days of this country by the Fabians are finally OVER!

- nick, worcester, 14/5/2010 11:19

Click to rate __ Rating 175

[Report abuse](#)

What an absolute waste of a specialist whose only crime was, being concerned for his patients, the hospital trust should be taken to task asap to resolve this issue.

- Mandy, nottingham, 14/5/2010 11:16

Click to rate __ Rating 156

[Report abuse](#)

Quite unbelievable but with a Liebour government so typical.

- michael., newbury, berks., 14/5/2010 11:14

Click to rate __ Rating 110

[Report abuse](#)

Some-one tells the truth and the hospital spends millions covering up. Millions that should have gone on patient care.

Sounds as if it is the hospital administrators that should be investigated.

Get this man back to work SAVING LIVES!

- Seve, Spain, 14/5/2010 11:13

Click to rate __ Rating 186

[Report abuse](#)

Whistleblowers of his calibre should be rewarded not treated like criminals I hope to god things like this will now be addressed by this new administration.....Labour has done so much damage to decent people who have paid a price for standing up and having principles at the very least he should have been listened too.....I truly hope things will get better with all my heart I hope this!

- Christine, England maybe now things will get better?, 14/5/2010 11:12

Click to rate __ Rating 42

[Report abuse](#)

Here's a good chance for Andrew Lansley to crack the whip on the bloated NHS bureaucracy, let's see if it's all talk.

- Ower Heaton, Newcastle upon Tyne UK, 14/5/2010 11:10

Click to rate Rating 44

[Report abuse](#)

Yes They Dont Want The Truth To Come Out!!!!.....And They'll Close Ranks And Protect They're Own, Right Or Wrong!!!

- David, London UK, 14/5/2010 11:07

Click to rate Rating 37

[Report abuse](#)

Those blocking this doctor's return are little more than criminals! I hope the new Health Secretary steps in to right this appalling wrong.

- Andrew, Portsmouth, UK, 14/5/2010 11:05

Click to rate Rating 62

[Report abuse](#)

Get over yourselves Mr spokesman, the problem is he blew the whistle and has been proved right concerning the deaths. Give him his job back and stop making excuses.

- Angela, Derby England, 14/5/2010 11:00

Click to rate Rating 44

[Report abuse](#)

What an exemplary doctor - what an appalling management team - sadly, only the former can be sacked - you simply cannot shift NHS Managers at all, they are completely unaccountable, despite being 100% responsible for the appalling death rates in most NHS Foundation Trust Hospitals, for failing to provide medics with decent equipment and levels of cleanliness, they continue to draw their hefty , hyperinflated salaries, and anyone who dares speak up against them on behalf of patients loses everything.

- nino, dorset, 14/5/2010 10:44

Click to rate Rating 46

[Report abuse](#)

The views expressed in the contents above are those of our users and do not necessarily reflect the views of MailOnline.

- [Today's headlines](#)
- [Most Read](#)

- [£1,200 tax shock for Middle England: How families will bear brunt of new coalition's drive to slash Britain's deficit](#)
- [New equalities minister hits out at 'male and pale' party negotiators](#)
- [Security fears as Cameron ditches his police outriders](#)
- [When Hilly met Billy \(who clearly has a bit of work to do on their not very special relationship\)](#)
- [Cameron begins retreat on five-year Parliament](#)
- [Lucky Brit scoops £85m EuroMillions jackpot in UK's biggest ever win](#)
- [Baby P's jailed mother is reunited with her children](#)
- [Student nurse thrown out after exposing abuse at shamed hospital](#)
- [Who dares mutinies: How the SAS defied orders to launch the most audacious rescue of Iraq war](#)
- [Labour MP Stephen Timms stabbed 'by woman' as he held constituency surgery](#)
- [Revealed: The very unappetising truth about McDonald's chicken meals](#)
- [Guess why BA couldn't hold strike talks? The union boss was in Cuba hailing the revolution](#)
- ['They done sex with me': Tearful mother tells court how girl, 8, described being raped](#)
- [Banker sexually harassed for eight years by male colleagues loses £600k payout claim](#)
- [Pictured: 30-stone woman winched off roof by firefighters so she can get to hospital](#)
- [U.S. father brands his three children with letters 'SK' - for 'Seamands' Kids' - because he was getting a divorce](#)
- [Lesbian couple 'forced out of church for holding hands in the pews'](#)
- [Ice cream weather here at last](#)
- [Families squeezed even harder as petrol hits new record price](#)
- [Scramble! RAF warplanes are intercepting Russian nuclear bombers at least once a month](#)
- [Mother jailed for life for punching and kicking her 21-month-old baby to death](#)

- [Sarkozy threatened to withdraw France from the euro unless Germany vowed to back Greece](#)
- [Battle of Britain memorial to stretch 116m into the sky](#)
- [16 dead as Red Shirts say army snipers are operating a 'shoot to kill' policy in Bangkok](#)
- [12-year-old in school uniform voted in Election](#)
- [Bloggers urge Facebook users to 'kill' their accounts](#)
- [Italian woman falls pregnant naturally aged 54](#)
- [The defiant villagers who set up barricades against invading gypsies](#)
- [MORE HEADLINES](#)

- [£1,200 tax shock for Middle England: How families will bear brunt of new coalition's drive to slash Britain's deficit](#)
- [Revealed: The very unappetising truth about McDonald's chicken meals](#)
- ['Drinking' neat vodka through your EYE for a quick buzz? It sounds insane, but countless young people are risking their sight in this new craze](#)
- [Who dares mutinies: How the SAS defied orders to launch the most audacious rescue of the Iraq war](#)
- [Whistleblower trainee nurse thrown out after exposing abuse at shamed hospital](#)
- [Lucky Brit scoops £85m EuroMillions jackpot in UK's biggest ever win](#)
- [Cameron Minor's schooldays: How his extraordinary life at his exclusive prep school helped shape our PM](#)
- [We'll take your kids: House-raid gang's terrifying threat to wife of England star Steven Gerrard](#)
- [When Hilly met Hague \(who has a bit of work to do on their not very special relationship\)](#)
- [Cameron begins retreat on five-year Parliament as Tories break rank over 'recipe for anarchy'](#)
- [Middle England's last stand: The defiant villagers who set up barricades against invading gypsies](#)
- [Jeffrey Archer: I'm giving away my £100m fortune... the kids can look after themselves](#)
- [New equalities minister Lib Dem Lynne Featherstone hits out at 'male and pale' party negotiators](#)
- [U.S. father brands his three children with letters 'SK' - for 'Seamands' Kids' - because he was getting a divorce](#)
- [Notting Hill, 1995 - a couple going places... David and Samantha Cameron in unseen pictures](#)
- [Ice-cream weather at last! Warm winds blow Arctic frosts away as Britain prepares to bask in the sun again](#)
- [Labour MP Stephen Timms stabbed 'by woman' as he held constituency surgery](#)
- [Video of girls, 8, dancing in racy routine to Beyonce's Single Ladies causes internet row](#)
- [Woman weighing 30 stone has to be winched off roof by ten firefighters so she can get to hospital](#)
- [Lesbian couple 'forced out of church for holding hands in the pews'](#)
- [At last! Miriam Clegg lets her hair down at a charity night with the stars](#)
- ['She's no cowering wallflower': Banker sexually harassed for eight years by male colleagues loses £600,000 compensation claim](#)
- ['They done sex with me': Tearful mother tells court how girl, 8, described being raped](#)
- [Mother jailed for life for punching and kicking her 21-month-old baby to death](#)
- [MOST READ IN DETAIL](#)

Ads by Google

[Green Energy Investments](#) 67% Forecasted Growth. Invest Now! \$10,000 Minimum Investment. [WorldEnergyResearch.com](#)
[Latest IT Vacancies](#) Want an IT job? Visit one of UK's leading IT job boards [www.theitjobboard.co.uk](#)
[Melanoma Awareness Month](#) Learn how to check your skin for suspicious moles. Watch our videos [MySkinCheck.MyDermatologist.org](#)
[Carte Noire Readers](#) Indulge With A Rich Mug Of Coffee For A More Seductive Coffee Break [CarteNoire.co.uk](#)
[The Churchill Coin](#) Buy Royal Mint's Limited Edition Winston Churchill Coin. Only £19.95 [www.RoyalMint.com](#)
[Ultra Hotel- Buenos Aires](#) The Most Glamorous Hotel in Buenos Aires. A Unique Experience. [www.HotelUltra.com](#)
[CRB Checks by TMG CRB](#) Paper and on-line CRB services Largest CRB Umbrella Body in the UK [www.tmgcrb.co.uk](#)
[Ask a Solicitor Online](#) 12 Solicitors Are Online. Ask a Question, Get an Answer ASAP. [Law.JustAnswer.com/CRB](#)

Published by Associated Newspapers Ltd
Part of the Daily Mail, The Mail on Sunday & Metro Media Group

[© Associated Newspapers Ltd](#)

