

NHS Tayside accused of cover-up over disgraced Dundee surgeon Eljamel

The Scottish Government confirmed it is 'considering' a full independent inquiry.

By [Justin Bowie](#)

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Disgraced ex-Dundee surgeon Professor Eljamel. Image: DC Thomson.

Whistleblowers claim NHS Tayside managers knew about concerns over disgraced Dundee doctor Professor Sam Eljamel years before he was suspended.

The Scottish Government has confirmed it is “considering” an independent inquiry into the rogue surgeon as the health board was accused of a cover-up.

Prof Eljamel botched dozens of operations and left patients with lifelong injuries between 1995 and 2013 while working in Dundee as a neurosurgeon.

NHS Tayside says it first became aware of allegations the rogue doctor was harming patients in June 2013 when he was put under supervision.

However, three surgeons who worked alongside him [have now claimed to the BBC](#):

- NHS Tayside was told about concerns as early as 2009
- Doctors who raised the alarm were shut down
- Prof Eljamel regularly left the operating table to do private work

The whistleblowers allege the surgeon regularly allowed junior doctors to carry out surgeries unsupervised when he should have been operating himself.

They claim the disgraced neurosurgeon was a bully who was regarded as “untouchable” since he brought money into his department through “questionable” research projects.

‘I was shut down’

One doctor told the BBC: “I did raise concerns at the time but I was shut down. We were told we would never get our traineeship.

“It went all the way up to the board. They all knew about it.”

An NHS Tayside spokesperson said: “NHS Tayside were not previously aware of these concerns by former trainees relating to their experiences of Professor Eljamel, who was suspended by NHS Tayside in December 2013.

“We understandably take these concerns very seriously and we would encourage anyone who has concerns about Professor Eljamel to contact the Patient Liaison Response Team.”

Campaigners who were harmed as a result of Prof Eljamel’s negligence say the bombshell claims now put the case for a full public inquiry beyond doubt.

SNP health chief Michael Matheson has offered patients a one-on-one independent review, but victims warn this does not go far enough.



Jules Rose has been leading calls for a public inquiry.

Campaigner Jules Rose, from Kinross, [has been fighting for justice](#) since Prof Eljamel removed her tear gland instead of a tumour.

Given the latest revelations, she now has doubts over whether the former NHS Tayside surgeon even carried out her operation.

She told us: “This isn’t just about Eljamel’s actions.

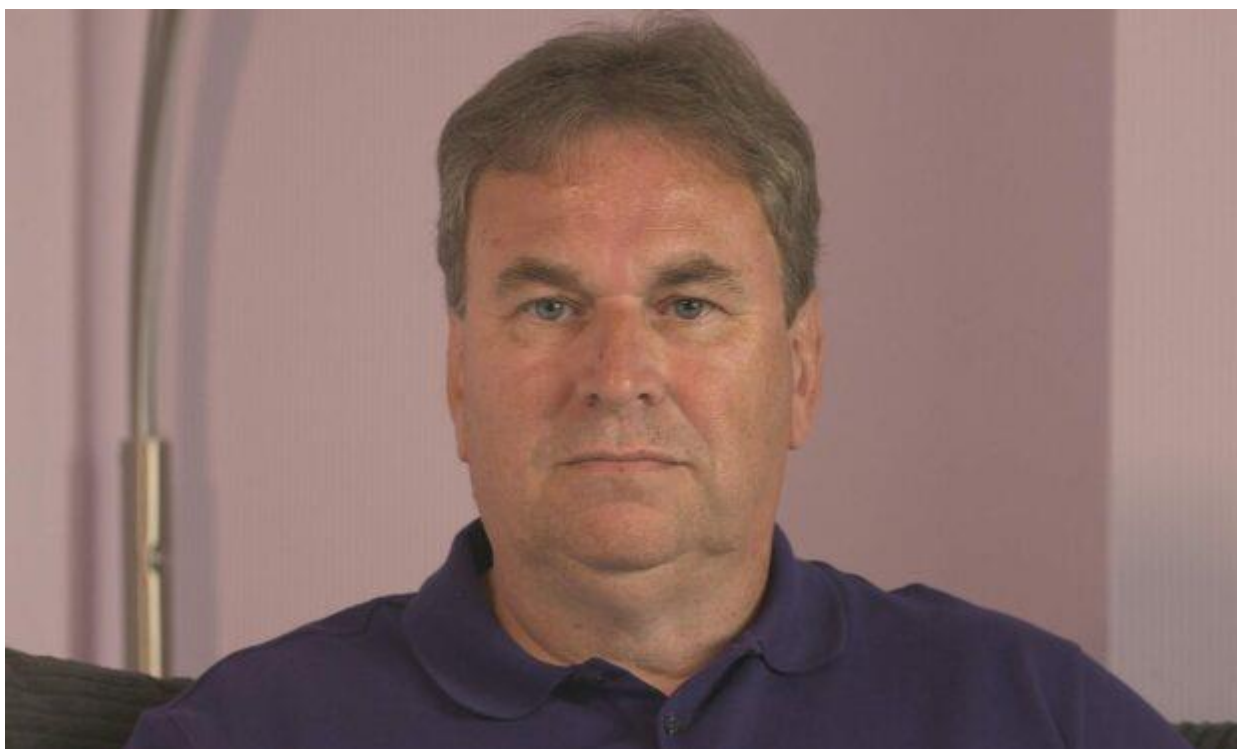
“This is about the board and nurses, doctors and senior management knowing what was going on since at least 2009.

“The board has failed in their duty to protect patients. A one-to-one independent review is insignificant at this level of harm.

“This is the tip of the iceberg.”

She added: “I’ve always been swaying back and forth if it was the registrar that performed my botched operation.

“Now upon hearing what this surgeon has said, it increases my inquisitiveness to seek the answer.”



Campaigner Pat Kelly was a victim of Professor Eljamel. Image: Pat Kelly.

Campaigner Pat Kelly has long doubted Prof Eljamel even showed up for his surgery – and he’s now more determined than ever to discover the truth.

He said: “Given what this whistleblower [referred to by the BBC as ‘Mark’] and the seriousness of what he says, I now believe the game is up for NHS Tayside and the Scottish Government.

“Enough is enough and I hope all MSPs do the decent thing and demand a Public Inquiry.”

He added: “I have always doubted that Eljamel showed up for my operation.

“I am now going back to Police Scotland to ask if they will now question those present in the theatre that day.”



Victims of Professor Sam Eljamel protested outside Holyrood. Image: DC Thomson.

Just two days ago, campaigners wore [hospital gowns splattered with blood outside Holyrood](#) as they pressed home their demands for an inquiry

At the time, they said a total of 99 victims have come forward claiming they suffered as a result of Prof Eljamel’s actions.

In the 48 hours since then, an additional four patients have come forward, taking the total up to 103.

The Scottish Government had previously [insisted any questions patients had were for NHS Tayside to answer](#).

But in a statement, a spokesperson told us a possible independent review into Prof Eljamel – who we revealed last year [lied about his credentials on his own website](#) – was now being “considered”.

They said: “We are considering what the best next steps would be, including a potential independent review, to ensure patients and their families can have confidence that they have the answers they need.”

Mid Scotland and Fife Tory MSP Liz Smith said: “These revelations are so serious they confirm my previous view that a full, independent enquiry is the best option.”

Dundee-based Labour MSP Michael Marra added: “Surely now the case for a public inquiry is made beyond doubt.”