



Jamaican doctor arrested for performing abortion on 12-year-old

Dr Lloyd Goldson and the girl's mother have been arrested for allegedly procuring an abortion, and could face life in prison

Adam Gabbatt in New York

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Police in Jamaica have charged a prominent doctor with performing an abortion on a pregnant 12-year-old.

Dr Lloyd Goldson, a Kingston based consultant, is said to have performed the abortion on 4 July. The girl's mother has also been charged.

Abortion is illegal in Jamaica, and in many other countries across the Caribbean and Latin America.

Goldson was charged on Thursday, police said. The doctor has been released on bail of \$150,000 and will appear in the Corporate Area Resident Magistrate's Court on 18 July.

The 12-year-old girl is reported to have been four months pregnant when her 32-year-old mother took her to Goldson's practice. Goldson performed the procedure himself, according to the Jamaica

Gleaner.

Detectives from the Jamaican Constabulary's centre for the investigation of sexual offences and child abuse arrested Goldson and the girl's mother on Wednesday under suspicion of procuring abortion. The mother has also been charged with cruelty to a child and failure to make a report to the Children's Registry, police said.

Goldson, from Hope Pastures, Kingston, is a obstetrics and gynaecology consultant who was honoured in 2009 by the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists. He was honored for "outstanding and distinguished work in the field of women's health", according to a Jamaica Gleaner article on the ceremony, which added that he had done "tremendous work" in his field.

A woman who answered the phone at Goldson's practice on Friday said the doctor had been released on bail and was planning to return to the clinic that afternoon. Asked if abortions had been performed at the clinic before, she said she "wouldn't know anything about that".

Some health officials have argued that Jamaica should legalize abortion up to 22 weeks of pregnancy. But religious groups in the overwhelmingly Christian country argue that abortion is morally wrong.

Jamaica's Offences Against the Person Act makes it illegal for a pregnant person to attempt to procure an abortion and for a doctor, or anyone else, to perform the procedure. Breaking the law is punishable by life in prison.

In 2005 the Abortion Policy Review Advisory Group was set up by Jamaica's health ministry to examine the impact of the country's abortion laws. The group found that most of the women seeking illegal abortions in Jamaica were "young, poor, unemployed and live in economically and socially deprived communities". The group recommended that abortion be legalised under certain conditions in the country, but no change in legislation has been forthcoming.

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