

Organ transplant scandal prompts calls for German reforms

January 3 2013

The head of the German doctors' lobby and politicians called Thursday for swift action to root out corruption following a scandal over preferential treatment for organ transplants.

The president of the German Medical Association, Frank Ulrich Montgomery, said physicians taking bribes in life-or-death cases would shatter the hard-earned faith that Germans have in them.

"Transplant doctors who still don't understand that they are destroying their own field with cheating and manipulation should get out of the profession," he told the daily Passauer Neue Presse.

Montgomery added that "all means available under criminal and professional law should be used" to bring corrupt doctors to justice.

His comments came after irregularities emerged at a transplant centre in the eastern city of Leipzig.

The clinic said that between 2010 and 2012, 38 people were wrongly registered as [dialysis patients](#) so that they would be given a higher priority on waiting lists for a [liver transplant](#).

It could not rule out that "money had changed hands" in exchange.

The head of the clinic as well as two senior [doctors](#) have been given a leave of absence while the institution conducts an internal probe. Public

prosecutors have opened a preliminary investigation.

The affair follows revelations in 2012 that other German hospitals engaged in dubious practices with [organ transplants](#), prompting an independent commission to launch a sweeping review.

The Leipzig cases emerged in the course of that inquiry.

The chief health policy spokesman of Chancellor [Angela Merkel](#)'s Christian Democratic Union, Jens Spahn, urged root-and-branch reform of the organ transplant system, echoing calls by other parties.

"Manipulation to get certain patients higher on waiting lists could mean a death sentence for other patients who have a more urgent need for an organ," he told the daily Rheinische Post.

Such practices must be "decisively outlawed, punished and stopped for all time".

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