Sask. doctor suspended for sex with patients

A Saskatoon family physician who admitted having sex with two patients has been stripped of his licence for at least nine months.

Dr. Armstrong Mettle can apply to practise medicine again next year if he undergoes sexual abuse counselling.

The governing counsel of the Saskatchewan College of Physicians and Surgeons made the decision Saturday during a closed-door session.

Dr. Mettle was charged with misconduct after a woman complained to the college 18 months ago that he had coerced her into having sex with him on a regular basis.

The patient, now 34, immigrated to Canada from the Middle East in 1994. She said he took advantage of her, insisting that she view pornographic material, dance, and perform sexual acts.

Dr. Mettle admitted having sex with her, but insisted that the woman had initiated the encounters.

Investigators were told that the woman had a history of mental health problems. She was described by her former psychiatrist as "very smart, conniving and extremely manipulative."

Dr. Mettle confessed that he had sex with a second female patient as well, but he described the relationship as a consensual. The women did not come forward with a complaint.

Before the suspension the physician agreed he had crossed professional boundaries, and said he regretted the mistake.

College lawyer Bryan Salte had asked that Mettle be banned for life from seeing female patients. But the doctor's lawyer had suggested a suspension of less than six months.

The governing counsel, which is made up of doctors, lawyers, and members of the public, did not outline how the penalty was determined when it released its written decision.