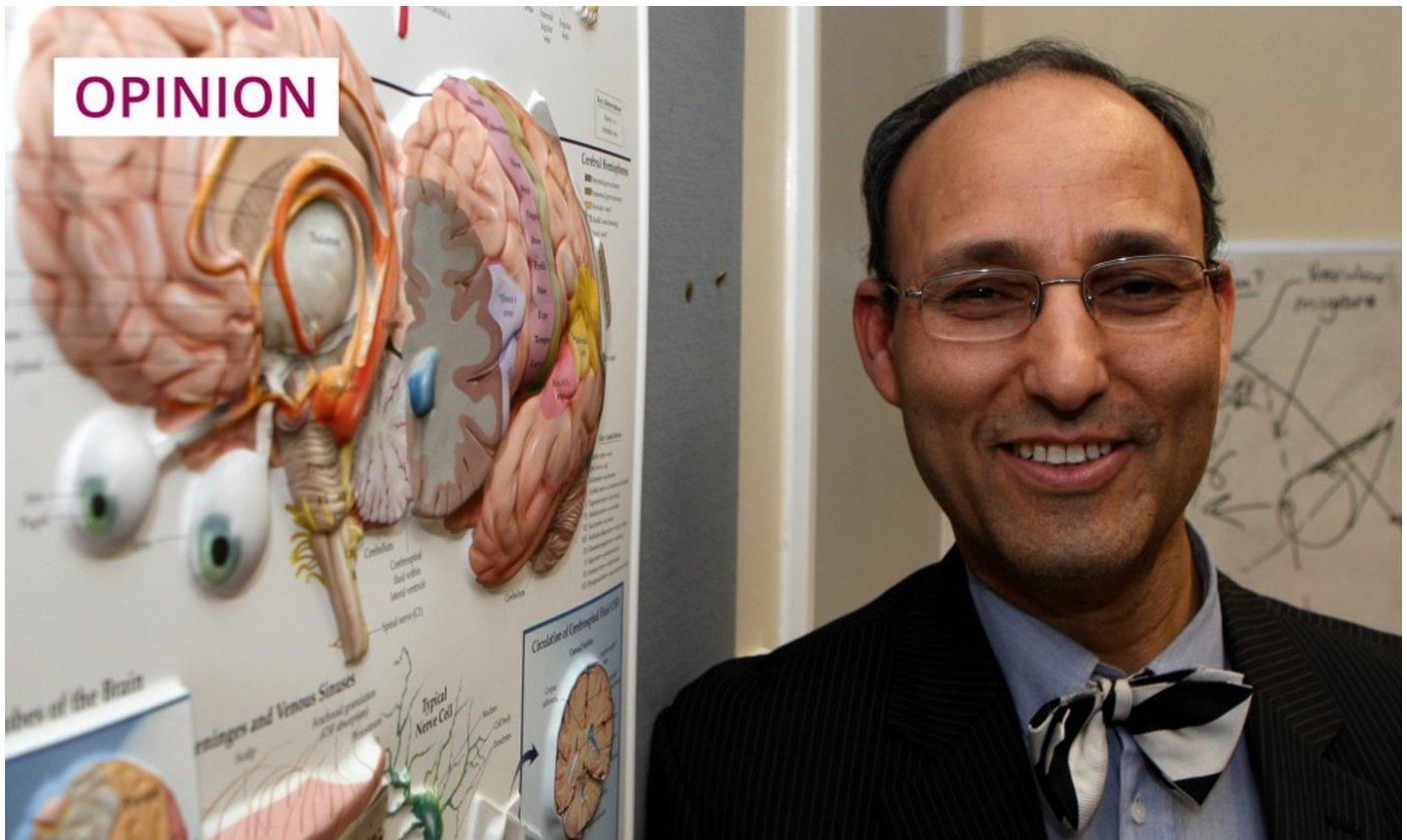


## COURIER OPINION: Public inquiry must be held into disgraced Dundee surgeon Eljamel cover-up claims

By The Courier :



The latest allegations against disgraced Dundee neurosurgeon Sam Eljamel read like something out of a horror film.

Former colleagues have described a culture of cover-ups and fear at NHS Tayside, where patient care was sacrificed to appease an “untouchable” bully.

The three surgeons-turned-whistleblowers make a series of disturbing claims:

That Professor Eljamel allowed junior surgeons in Dundee to operate on patients unsupervised while he was away from Ninewells Hospital doing private work. And that some of these surgeries went disastrously wrong.



Surgeon Sam Eljamel was head of his department at Ninewells Hospital, Dundee, until he was suspended in 2013.

That the shamed professor rejected X-rays – out of arrogance and for cost reasons – and operated on the wrong place in the spines of at least 70 patients, leaving many disabled.

That NHS Tayside knew about concerns as early as 2009, but did not act on them because their high-profile neurosurgeon was bringing in lucrative research funding and was thus entitled to be treated like “a god”.

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.”

“NHS Tayside has covered things like this up for a long time in Dundee. It went all the way up to the board.”

## **Wider questions about surgeon Eljamel’s time in Dundee**

The [allegations have been met with anger from patients](#) who suffered harm as a result of Prof Eljamel’s actions.

More than 100 are now [demanding answers to what went wrong](#) before he was finally suspended in 2013.



Patients say they were the victims of botched surgery by Prof Eljamel when he worked at Ninewells Hospital in Dundee. Image: Steve Brown / DC Thomson.

But the new claims also suggest a rot that goes far beyond the neurosurgery department at that time.

They talk to a culture of secrecy and negligence that went right to the heart of the NHS Tayside board.

And as such they are of concern to anyone who has entrusted NHS Tayside with their own care or that of a loved one.

The board's response – that it is working with the Scottish government to support an independent review of patients' care under Prof Eljamel – is too little too late.

There are now much bigger questions, which can only be answered by an independent public inquiry into the Eljamel scandal and the structures within NHS Tayside which allowed it to happen.



Victims of Prof Eljamel protested outside Holyrood on Wednesday. Image: DC Thomson.

What else has been excused and covered over?

How many other lives have been ruined?

Who permitted it to happen?

And when will anyone be held properly accountable for this shameful episode?

## Public inquiry is long overdue

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

Not all of our patients and supporters can be at our protests. Many aren't able to attend due to their ongoing health issues from Eljamel and NHS Tayside. Here's a small reminder that this is just the tip of the iceberg! Please tweet us with your video message of support!

[pic.twitter.com/u0GZibiHYq](https://pic.twitter.com/u0GZibiHYq)

— Eljamel Inquiry (@eljamelInquiry) [June 14, 2023](#)

Sadly, Prof Eljamel's victims no longer trust NHS Tayside to answer those questions wholly and truthfully.

And faith in the wider institution has been severely dented by these latest revelations.

The implications go far beyond Eljamel's department. And they raise serious concerns about the safety of patients throughout NHS Tayside then and now.

An independent inquiry is the only way to address these concerns, and there is no more time to waste.