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News

Miami Psychiatrist Arrested In Sex Predator Investigation

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MIAMI -- A practicing psychiatrist was arrested Tuesday in an online sexual predator investigation.

Dr. Jose Gustavo Valladares, who works at Jackson Memorial Hospital, was arrested after a two-month investigation in which a detective from Tequesta posed online as a 14-year-old girl.

Images

"He had no idea that this was a 40-some-year-old man, a detective. He thought this was a little girl, and his intentions were not honorable," said Lt. Bill Schwartz, of the Miami Police Department.

Police said Valladares used a webcam to send "the girl" pictures of his genitals.

Valladares lives in a condominium on Coral Way, which police have searched. His case is similar to cases recently shown on Dateline NBC in which men expecting to hook up with teenagers are met instead by police and a Dateline camera crew, NBC 6's Ari Odzer reported. Miami police said, however, that Valladares

is the only suspect in this case and that his arrest is not part of a larger investigation.

Valladares was charged with distribution of harmful material to a minor and online solicitation of a minor for sex.

Police said Valladares might also be charged with lewd and lascivious exhibition.

Representatives of Jackson Memorial Hospital, where Valladares is a senior resident in his last year of training, released a statement Tuesday afternoon.

"Everyone at Jackson Health Systems is extremely disturbed by the allegations. We take matters like this very seriously and have zero tolerance for anyone who might inflict harm on any other individual," the statement said.

"He certainly knows the emotional ramifications, the negative ramifications, to a child when they're exposed to this sort of thing, but yet he went ahead and did this. A psychiatrist is supposed to provide a safe space for his patients. I doubt that this shrink would get 'Doctor of the Year,'" Schwartz said.

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Police said they are worried that Valladares might have had contact with real victims. Anyone who thinks their children might have had contact with Valladares is asked to call the Miami Police Department.

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