

Rockland Rabbi Faces Sex Charge

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A Rockland County rabbi was charged Wednesday with posing as a Brooklyn doctor specializing in infertility problems, and allegedly sexually abusing and assaulting a patient.

"The defendant is charged with preying on couples who wanted desperately to have children," Brooklyn District Attorney Elizabeth Holtzman said, announcing the arrest of Rabbi Hirsch Travis, of Monsey.

He was charged with illegally operating the Fertility Foundation in the Borough Park section of Brooklyn. Travis also maintained a business address at 441 Foster Ave., also in Brooklyn.

The 59-year-old rabbi allegedly diagnosed one of his patients, a 21-year-old man, as having a low sperm count and treated him with prescription drugs, which resulted in the man ultimately undergoing surgery and suffering a sustained loss of sexual function because of Travis's treatment, prosecutors said.

The 23-count indictment also charges Travis with the sexual abuse of an unidentified 27-year-old female patient.

He was arrested March 26 at the Foundation offices when a female undercover investigator had scheduled a third visit to his office.

Travis, the father of six children, lives at 25 Route 306 in Monsey.

A woman who answered the phone at the address but would not identify herself said, "You are dealing with an honest man," but declined further comment.

Travis faces a maximum prison term of 5 to 15 years and fines doubling any gain he may have made in the commission of the alleged crimes. He was free Wednesday on \$25,000 bail.

Holtzman who said the investigation was continuing, asked anyone who may have been treated by Travis to get in touch with her office.