

## **Sexual relations between doctors and former patients**

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The New Zealand Medical Association's National Policy Council considers that sexual relations with former patients would, in many instances, be regarded as unethical.

The particular areas of concern are those in which an exploitation of patient vulnerability could be shown to have occurred. This would include long term counselling, previous sexual abuse, or evidence of impaired judgment.

It is acknowledged that in some cases the patient/doctor relationship has been either brief, minor in nature, or in the distant past. In such circumstances and where the sexual relationship has developed from social contact away from the professional environment, no impropriety would be deemed to have been observed.

Any complaints about a sexual relationship with a former patient need to be considered on an individual basis before being condemned as unethical.