

Article:	Officials Not Told of CV Fib
Date:	2 August 2007
Source:	The Australian (Sean Parnell)

QUEENSLAND health authorities were not notified for more than a week that Mohammed Asif Ali had admitted embellishing part of his CV and keeping rubber stamps to forge supporting documents.

The Australian Federal Police made the discovery about a fortnight ago, but the alarm was raised only last Friday amid the furore over the release of Dr Asif Ali's colleague and friend, Mohamed Haneef.

Dr Asif Ali, who had been working in oncology at the Gold Coast Hospital, was suspended with pay on Friday night and is now being investigated by Queensland Health, the Queensland Medical Board and the state's Crime and Misconduct Commission.

Immigration Minister Kevin Andrews sought to draw attention to the case yesterday as his department offered Queensland authorities their "document examination facilities and experts".

While the allegations against the 32-year-old Indian centre on his character, rather than his competency as a doctor, he still faces being deregistered and then deported.

Dr Asif Ali escorted Dr Haneef to Brisbane International Airport on July 2. Dr Haneef was detained on suspicion of being involved in the British car bombing plot, but after the case against him collapsed, was allowed to return to India last weekend.

Having had possession of Dr Haneef's car and laptop, Dr Asif Ali was initially detained by police for questioning, and had his Gold Coast unit raided twice and his file taken from the Queensland Medical Board. When Dr Asif Ali was released on July 4, AFP Commissioner Mick Keelty said "there is nothing to suggest he has committed any offences at this point in time" but yesterday he confirmed he remained a person of interest.

The AFP had discovered Dr Asif Ali exaggerated his employment history, and had letterheads and rubber stamps that would have allowed him to forge documents to cover the lies in his CV.

His lawyer, Neil Lawler, yesterday said Dr Asif Ali was formally cautioned by the AFP a fortnight ago but he did not expect any criminal charges.

"He explained why he did that. It was for an improper reason, he acknowledges that," Mr Lawler said. "It was done many years ago when he was under ... pressure and had a death in the family."

Mr Lawler said Dr Asif Ali told the AFP he had exaggerated the period of time he worked in India by several months to make himself more employable in Britain, but did not use any forgeries.

After being cautioned, Dr Asif Ali -- who had been given leave by Queensland Health and was moved to another unit to avoid the media -- went back to work.

On Friday, Queensland Police Commissioner Bob Atkinson -- who had been aware of the information for some time -- sought permission from the AFP to notify Queensland Health.

"In the unfolding nature of the circumstances, I just considered that timing was appropriate," Mr Atkinson said last night.

Queensland Health director-general Uschi Schreiber received a briefing from the AFP later that night, and suspended Dr Asif Ali.