

We nail kickback doctors

Lab and 29 medics quietly settle for a mere R300 000 – described as a ‘slap on the wrist’

BY LYNNE ALTENROXEL

Another 29 doctors and the country's largest pathology laboratory have been punished in the continuing saga over medical kickbacks.

Lancet Laboratories and the doctors chose to pay a total of R300 000 in admission of guilt fines to the Health Professions Council of South Africa (HPCSA) about six months ago – without the council breathing a word about it.

The punishment followed an exposé in *The Star* in May 2000 showing how two of the country's biggest pathology groups – Lancet and Ampath – had paid



Revealed ... *The Star* reported on the scam in May 2000.

BHF estimates that fraud is to blame for between R1 billion and R12-billion – about a quarter – of South Africa's annual R40-billion private health-care sector bill.

Earlier this month, the council found four Linksfield Park Clinic doctors guilty of receiving kickbacks from a

sum paid, saying he was not obliged to do so.

He confirmed that a preliminary committee of inquiry, which evaluated evidence of kickbacks, had given Lancet and 29 doctors the option of defending themselves in a disciplinary inquiry or paying admission of guilt fines.