3 Chinese grads sue USC over treatment by doctor

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Three Chinese graduates at the University of Southern California will join seven other women in filing lawsuits against their alma mater for damages caused by a longtime campus gynecologist who allegedly sexually abused them.  
The civil lawsuit, jointly announced Tuesday by Deng Law Center and Girardi & Keese at a news conference in Los Angeles, is the latest in a string of legal actions filed by former patients against USC and Dr George Tyndall, a gynecologist who was accused of inappropriately touching young patients and making sexual comments during his 30-year tenure at Engemann Student Health Center.  
Tyndall, 71, also allegedly targeted Chinese patients due to their lack of understanding of US medical norms, according to a report in the Los Angeles Times.  
About 300 former patients have contacted the university in regards to Tyndall, the newspaper reported on Wednesday. The university has begun to share the names of ex-patients with the Los Angeles Police Department, but didn't disclose how many names were released, according to the Times.  
Christopher Mo, an LAPD public information officer, told China Daily on Wednesday that he is aware that USC has given the department information about former patients, but he said there still is no formal criminal investigation against Tyndall.  
Tyndall has denied all allegations and told the Los Angeles Times he had "done nothing wrong".  
Complaints about Tyndall's alleged misconduct toward young female patients include improper photographing of genitals, improper touching during pelvic exams and making sexually suggestive comments.  
He had been the only full-time gynecologist at the health center before he agreed to retire in June 2017 with a separation agreement, including severance pay.  
Despite complaints from patients and co-workers, the university didn't notify police nor publicly acknowledge the accusations against Tyndall, the Times reported.  
"A sexual assault is much different than breaking your ankle. You break your ankle and you get over it. A sexual assault, especially to a young woman, affects them down the road. It could be very psychologically damaging and devastating to them," said Thomas Girardi of Girardi & Keese, a personal injury law firm.  
He said the firm is still completing its investigation, but he expects the case to be filed in Los Angeles Superior Court in seven to 10 days.  
According to Deng Law Center, all three plaintiffs moved back to China after graduation. Deng said one of the plaintiffs was married for a short time but later got divorced. She told Deng that Tyndall's alleged sexual abuse may have caused her husband to feel uncomfortable living with her, The China Press newspaper reported.  
Many Chinese students opted to stay quiet because time had passed and they are afraid that revealing the experiences could harm their reputations, Deng said.  
On Monday, six other women filed separate lawsuits against USC. On Tuesday, another student came forward with her story alongside her lawyer at a news conference.  
"I know the Deng Law Center has been retained by probably 20 young women. I know a lot of other firms that have been retained as well," Girardi said. "So it's a situation where a lot of people are involved."  
An office manager at Deng Law Center said Wednesday that other women former patients also contacted the firm. She didn't disclose whether any are current USC students, citing privacy issues.  
There are 45,500 students enrolled for the 2017-18 academic year at the private university in Los Angeles, including around 5,400 from China.  
In a letter to faculty and staff on Tuesday, USC Provost Michael Quick wrote: "Some ask about Dr Tyndall's targeting of Chinese (and other international) students. Although this was alleged, there is no evidence that any one group of students was affected more than others. We are carefully reviewing all complaints and have yet to find a pattern in who was affected."  
The Chinese Students and Scholars Association at USC called on Chinese students to bravely speak up against any violations of their rights.  
The USC Board of Trustees announced Wednesday it will hire outside legal counsel to launch an independent investigation into the alleged misconduct and lack of reporting that occurred at the health center.  
More than 200 faculty members at the university have called for USC President Max Nikias to resign.  
Board of Trustees Chairman John Mork released a statement on Tuesday saying its executive committee strongly supports Nikias.  
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