**O.C. Doctor Investigated in Abortion Death**

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SAN DIEGO — California's medical board is investigating a doctor who lives in Orange County and has a history of criminal convictions because of the death of a Tijuana, Mexico, woman after an abortion at his clinic here.

Magdalena Ortega-Rodriquez, 23, died Thursday at a San Diego area hospital after being rushed by paramedics from the south San Diego abortion clinic.

After her death, state officials began their investigation of Dr. Suresh Gandotra, 45, who practices at El Norte Clinica Medica in south San Diego and lives in Orange County.

Gandotra's attorney said the woman's uterus was cut accidentally during the abortion, causing bleeding that killed her. The clinic called paramedics saying the woman was in cardiac arrest and being given CPR.



"This is a standard risk of the procedure," said the attorney, Evan L. Ginsburg of Fullerton. "It is tragic. The doctor is devastated. We don't believe this was below the standard of care."

In May, 1990, Gandotra was convicted in Orange County Superior Court and served time in jail for grand theft, Medi-Cal fraud, giving drugs to patients without proper authorization and aiding the unlicensed practice of medicine.

In September, 1993, after a delay because of Gandotra's unsuccessful appeals motions, the Medical Board of California filed an action seeking to take away his license.

A medical board spokeswoman declined to comment on the case, but said it is being investigated by both the board and the state attorney general's office.

Ortega-Rodriquez was 26 to 28 weeks pregnant. A San Diego deputy county medical examiner said officials could not determine if her fetus was viable at the time of the abortion.

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