

Death toll of 'Devil's nurse' could climb as high as 300

Oliver Moody

A German male nurse has admitted murdering more than 100 patients with toxic doses of drugs.

Niels Högel, 41, dubbed the "Devil's nurse" by German media, is already serving a life sentence for six murders and attempted murders at two hospitals between 2000 and 2005. Police are said to believe that the true number of his victims could be as high as 300.

At the start of a trial yesterday, Högel was accused of injecting patients with overdoses so that he could try to resuscitate them out of "boredom and a desire for recognition by his colleagues". Asked by the judge at the state court in Oldenburg, Lower Saxony, whether the

allegations that he was to blame for the deaths of another 100 people were true, Högel said: "Yes. What has been stated is how it is."

Högel said that he had struggled to cope with stress and the "pressure to perform" after he began working at a hospital in Oldenburg in 1999.

In 2005 he was caught administering an unauthorised injection to a patient. Three years later he was sentenced to seven and a half years in prison for attempted murder.

Police subsequently exhumed 134 bodies from 67 graveyards, some as far away as Poland and Turkey, for toxicological tests. The bodies of at least another 100 patients could not be examined as they had been cremated.

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