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Moscow Cops Bust Snake Oil Crime Ring That Preyed on the Elderly, Disabled

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Thirty-two suspects believed to have been part of an organized effort to defraud some the city's most vulnerable residents with promises of "miracle" cures have been detained, Moscow police said in a statement.

Law enforcement officers "held a large-scale operation to curb the activities of an organized group whose members were luring money from pensioners, people with disabilities and veterans of World War II under the pretext of selling them miracle drugs and devices," the statement said.

Suspects allegedly posed as medical professionals and urged their victims to purchase medical equipment, using complex medical terminology. According to the statement, they frequently moved offices in order to evade detection. None of the 32 suspects detained thus far was found to have been qualified to practice medicine.

Of the 32 suspects initially detained, 10 have been remanded into custody by a Moscow court and one has been released on house arrest.

Preliminary evidence suggests some 200 victims were roped into the fraud, which has caused financial damages in the amount of 10 million rubles ($170,500).

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