

IMAGING SCENARIO: STUDENT COMPETENCY

Scenario Number 2

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For my ethical scenario evaluation, I decided to talk about Scenario number 2, The case of Jacob and the diseased leg. Jacob was a high school-aged quarterback on the football team and was offered a college scholarship for when he graduates. Just before his senior year, he suffered a compound fracture of the fibula bone. Since the bone broke through the skin, he had to get an orthopedic surgeon, Dr. M, to repair it. He was kept in the hospital for 3 days and received antibiotics through an IV. Dr. M told Jacob to come back once a week for the next 6 weeks so he could make sure his leg was healing. At his sixth-week appointment, he was told he would get his cast removed, after removing the cast the doctor saw that Jacob's leg was slightly inflamed and the area was draining around the stitches, but the bone was healing. After the doctor removed Jacob's cast, he told him to wait there while he checked on a patient across the hall. Dr. M removed his gloves and washed his hands before going across the hall. The doctor left the door open, and Jacob's parents could see and hear the doctor examining the other patient's infected leg. The doctor told the other patient that her osteomyelitis was getting better, and he came back into Jacob's room without putting on his gloves or washing his hands. He examined Jacob's leg and told him he would get him a prescription for antibiotics and to return the following week. When Jacob came back that next week his leg looked worse, and the doctor told him he had an infection and would need surgery to drain it. The lab report said he had osteomyelitis, which took months to heal, making him lose his scholarship. Jacob's parents sued the doctor after they found out he had osteomyelitis.

There were a few ethical dilemmas that occurred in the scenario. The first thing was that Dr. M left the other patient's door open so people could hear what was going on and that

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broke HIPPA. The other thing that happened was Dr. M did not put on his gloves or wash his hands and he could have spread that infection to Jacob. There are a couple of things the doctor could do to resolve things; the first thing he could do was apologize to Jacob and ask what he could do to help. Another thing he can do is see if the facility can cover the charges of the surgery to drain the infection and his hospital stay. He could also do nothing and just see what the court says since Jacob's family is suing him. I would say the best solution is to see if they can settle the lawsuit by paying for Jacob's medical bills because there is a good chance this would not have happened if the doctor had just washed his hands in between patients and put on gloves. If he did that then the family would not have a reason to sue over the infection. He also could have avoided much of this if he had shut both patients' doors and respected confidentiality and not broken HIPPA.

The things that Dr. M has done would be considered an unintentional tort or to be more specific it is negligence; he did not mean to infect the patient, but he did not take the steps to prevent what happened. He broke two of the malpractice C's, confidentiality, and caution. He broke confidentiality by leaving doors open during exams and he was not cautious because he did not wash his hands. If the court decides he is guilty he will have to pay a fine for what he has done, and the hospital will probably owe the family money.

Next, I would like to talk about the code of ethics and which ones Dr. M did not follow. I believe Dr. M broke two of our codes of ethics, this is number 8 and number 9. I believe it would be number 8 because the doctor did not provide Jacob and his family with quality care, he intentionally did not wash his hands or put gloves on because he was either too lazy or in a hurry and did not think it was necessary. I also think he broke code of ethics number 9; he

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broke HIPPA by leaving multiple doors open and Jacobs's family heard all the other patient's histories.

I think the primary problem in this scenario is that the doctor should have washed his hands after each patient and must always wear gloves, especially when dealing with contagious things. He has now hurt his career legally because Jacob's mom has decided to sue, He hurt his career ethically because he broke multiple rules in the code of ethics, and he hurt his career professionally because now everybody knows that he cuts corners in his practice. If I had to address this scenario from a manager-type standpoint, then I think Dr. M should for sure be in trouble. There was no reason that he had to cut corners and not wash his hands, especially after someone had something contagious. If I had the authority, then I would offer to pay for Jacob's surgery and hospital stay because the infection has probably been caused by the doctor.