

Imaging Scenario: Student Competency

Scenario No. 2

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Jacob, an outstanding quarterback for his high school football team with offers to play college football when he graduates, suffered a compound fracture during a summer football practice. Since the fracture broke through the skin, he required a surgical repair to align the bones back together and close the skin. After several days in the hospital, Jacob was released with instructions for an office visit once a week for six weeks. After the sixth week, Jacob's parents took him once again to Dr. M his orthopedic surgeon to have his cast removed. While Dr. M removed the cast, the bone seemed to be healing, but they did find a slightly inflamed and draining area around his stitches. Once the cast was fully removed Dr. M removed his gloves and washed his hands while he told Jacob and his parents to wait for a few minutes as he needed to run across the hallway and check on another patient, Sarah K.

While Dr. M was visiting with the patient next door Jacob's parents could hear the conversation about Sarah's osteomyelitis since the doors connecting the exam rooms were left open. They also saw that Dr. M did not replace his gloves or put any on when he came back into Jacob's room to examine his leg. A week later Jacob came back in for a follow-up appointment and his leg was infected with a large abscess. After another surgery to remove the abscess and a pathology report the infection came back that Jacob had developed osteomyelitis. This resulted in Jacob having to heal for several months which caused him to be unable to play football that fall, and he ended up losing his chance at a college scholarship to play football. In the end, they sued Dr. M for negligence.

There are several problems throughout this scenario that if addressed differently could have kept Jacob healthy and Dr. M from being sued for negligence. Since the surgeon did not wash his hands or use hand sanitizer before examining Jacob's leg, this is considered unethical. When Jacob's parents saw what was happening, they should have spoken up to the surgeon

before he continued his work. Although this might have been difficult since doctors are seen as superior to people, it could have helped save Jacob from an infection. Another issue arose when Dr. M left the doors open connecting the exam rooms breaking a HIPPA violation. Surgeons have an obligation to talk to patients in a confidential space where other patients cannot hear.

Since Dr. M is being sued this should be treated as a civil lawsuit due to a wrongful act that was committed. Although the act was unintentional and not meant to do harm Dr. M must be held liable for his reckless actions. Surgeons have a duty to reasonable care for each patient and failure to provide that care can result in injury. Since the surgeon did not provide Jacob with safe medical treatment the lawsuit is necessary to hold him accountable for the damages done to Jacob.

With Dr. M being sued for negligence this could result in the hospital also being sued for medical negligence since the surgeon provided unethical care. This could result in the hospital going to trial as well as the surgeon. When patients experience cases similar to this, they are going to sue anyone liable in hopes for the most money.

Dr. M also did not follow through on the code of Ethics which serves as a guide for healthcare workers and their obligations to patients. Not upholding number 7 or number 9 of the Code of Ethic's resulted in unethical care. Number 9 states, "performs services in accordance with an accepted standard of practice," and Dr. M not following an accepted standard of practice by not sanitizing his hands before and after every patient made him break a Code of Ethics Law. The next one is number 9 which states, "respects the patient's right to privacy" with Dr. M not closing the doors connecting the exam rooms he broke the Code of Ethics of protecting one's personal medical information.

In the end, this lawsuit is beneficial in terms of both parties involved. It will hold Dr. M accountable for what happened to Jacob and Dr. M will learn to always sanitize his hands before and after every patient. If I was in this situation and was placed in the parent's position, I would have spoken up before the doctor examined my child's leg. Jacob will never be able to get his missed year of football back, but maybe his experience will save another person.