

Imaging Scenario: Student Comprehensive Evaluation

The Case of Jacob and the Diseased Leg - Scenario No. 2

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Short Summary

The case of Jacob and the Diseased Leg is a scenario where Jacob a high school football player who has been offered a college scholarship due to his outstanding football skills suffered a compound fracture. Since he had an opened fracture, he required surgery which was performed by an orthopedic surgeon Dr. M. Six weeks after his surgery Jacob went back to Dr. M's office for his cast removal. Jacob had slight inflammation and drainage around his stitches but other than that his leg was healing fine. After his exam Dr. M removed his gloves and washed his hands and went over to examine Sarah the patient across the hall who had osteomyelitis, because the provider left the doors open of both patient rooms, Jacob's parents could hear and see everything that was happening in Sarah's room. Dr. M went back to Jacob's room and without washing his hands or wearing gloves he examined his leg one more time and advised Jacob's parents to keep his stitches clean and dry and prescribed some oral antibiotics. A week later Jacob's leg was grossly infected with a large abscess causing him to have another surgery to drain it, the pathology report determine that he had osteomyelitis which took several months to heal. Jacob lost his scholarship due to the delay in his recovery. Jacob's parents requested the results of the tissue test and sue Dr. M for negligence.

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Jacob's recovery wouldn't have been delayed if it wasn't because of the osteomyelitis he contracted after his cast was removed. The infection caused Jacob to have another surgery and cost him his college scholarship due to the delay in his recovery. This could have been avoided if his orthopedic surgeon Dr. M practiced good medical asepsis, even though he removed his gloves and washed his hands after he first examined Jacob, he didn't have the same safety precautions when he came back to his room after examining another patient.

Dr. M made several mistakes because when he went across the hall to examine his patient Sarah, he left both doors open allowing Jacob's parents to listen and see what was going on in Sarah's room. As a healthcare provider he had the ethical and professional obligation to maintain patient confidentiality and by leaving the door open he breached his patient's confidentiality because now the people across the hall heard Sarah's private health information, which is how Jacob's parents knew she had osteomyelitis, the same infection their son contracted after Dr. M examine him without washing his hands or using gloves. Dr. M also committed unintentional tort by negligence/medical negligence. He had a *duty* of care to treat and repair Jacob's fracture, a *breach* of that duty occurred when he acted with reckless disregard for Jacob's limb by not practicing proper medical asepsis by washing or sanitizing his hands and wearing gloves when entering the patient's room before carefully examining his leg which *caused* Jacob to develop osteomyelitis.

Dr. M should have used proper medical asepsis not only after the first time he examined Jacob, but he should have properly washed/sanitized his hands and used gloves before examining

Sarah and then again once he came back to examine Jacob for the second time, even if the rooms were just across the hall. These proper practices could have avoided Jacob contracting the infection and even though he had slight inflammation and drainage from his stitches when his cast was first removed, with his providers' advice of keeping the area clean and dry and taking his antibiotics Jacob's leg would have kept healing just fine.