

The Case of Jacob and the Diseased Leg

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Abstract

The paper analyzes *The Jacob Case and The Disease Leg* based on the three-step ethics model to solve the ethical dilemmas exhibited by the case study. As highlighted in this particular case, Jacob was an excellent quarterback on his football team. Unfortunately, he was injured while practising on the field. This caused him to suffer from a compound fracture of the fibula bone of his lower leg. He was taken to the hospital, and corrective surgery was carried out by a surgeon to close the already-open skin and reset the fractured bone. The physician asked him to return to the hospital after six weeks for his cast removal.

Subsequently, the physician examined Jacob's leg without wearing protective gloves and, in turn, infected him with a large abscess because of the physician's negligence. Jacob went ahead and sued the physician for negligence of care. The physician who conducted the treatment may or may not be sued for negligence of care (Pattinson, 2017). In this case study, there exist different forms of [ethical dilemmas](#) that may be reflected in the decision-maker's mind. In an analysis of the ethical dilemma, the decision maker can opt to apply the three-step model in evaluating the gaps in ethics.

Three-Step Ethics model

This model enables decision-makers to evaluate ethical dilemmas. It consists of three questions that the evaluator must ask in order to analyze ethical dilemmas successfully. Additionally, it is a fast way to check when a person is uncomfortable with an ethical decision. In regard to this case study, the three-step model is analyzed as follows:

Is the action legal? In this case, the physician's acts are illegal. The act of not using gloves and cleaning hands before attending to a patient is illegal. All acts of negligence of care are against the law of nature and ethics. The act is also morally wrong and against all laws of moral ethics. It is illegal to harm patients in any way because of negligence or a reckless attitude.

Before preceding surgical operations, physicians are required to cleanse their hands and change gloves. The failure to discharge this obligation is termed a tortious liability that attracts judicial intervention by way of awarding damages. In regard to the case study, the physician has conducted an illegal act, and a civil case as the healthcare practitioner has deprived Jacob of the right to receive effective medical attention. There is negligence of action and public duty as stipulated in the moral and ethical norms of healthcare practices. The physician owes Jacob a duty of care in administering treatment, but he breached his duties, which resulted in Jacob suing him for medical negligence to

recover damages from the succumbed abscess.

Is the action balanced? The action, in this case, is not balanced. Jacob cannot correct the physician's mistake of not wearing gloves before the commencement of the procedure. This is articulated by the fact that the physician's knowledge is superior to that of the patient, and thus there is an imbalanced action between Jacob and his physician. This is because Jacob approached the physician expecting expertise in medical conditions, as all medical personnel are bound to have skills and knowledge in patient care and relieving medical problems (Pandit and Shobha Pandit, 2009). Based on medical professional knowledge, physicians are in a better position to understand what needs to be done in a medical routine, and their actions are not to be questioned by patients. They are duly aware that negligent acts and careless mistakes are bound to harm the patients, of which the patients are not aware of the consequences.

How will the action make Jacob and his physician feel? Based on the case study, if the physician's actions are intentional, he may feel remorse. This is due to the fact that he knows the health complications caused to his patient by his faulty actions. As a medical practitioner, the physician's action is a disgrace since cleaning hands and changing or wearing gloves before handling patients is the first procedure to which all clinicians are required to adhere. In Jacob's situation, he might have felt offended and angered by his physician's negligence. This is because he came to that specific healthcare facility expecting medical care and treatment to cure his leg, but not to contract other health complications due to the physician's failure to adhere to healthcare practice guidelines.

In conclusion, the three-step ethics model states that if the first two questions are fair and the answer to the third question is positive, the action is considered to be ethical in nature. However, considering this case, the first two questions are unfair, and therefore, the physician committed an unethical action based on the negligence of care. The physician owed Jacob a safe medical procedure, and considering the ethical principles in medicine, it was unjust for the physician to attend to Jacob's leg before wearing gloves. It is right for Jacob to sue the physician in a court of law. If physicians commit civil wrongs, they must be held accountable by way of damages to the person wronged (Torres et al. 2012). Therefore, Jacob should be compensated for the damages caused by the negligent act. Every medical professor has a duty to act with a high degree of skill and care for the patients to evade the tort of negligence of care.

References

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