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CASE AND COMMENTARY

Performing Physical Exams on Fellow Students

Commentary by Audiey Kao, MD, PhD

Case

Mary, a third-year medical student is currently doing an OB/GYN rotation. Her school has often used standardized patients to help medical students become proficient with various examinations. One day, no standardized patient is available. The attending physician suggests that one of the female medical students volunteer so that students can practice pelvic examinations. Mary feels that this is an inappropriate role for a female medical student. She feels that such a request is coercive, considering that their clerkship grade depends on such educational exercises.

Questions for Discussion

1. What should Mary do?
2. How does informed consent apply in these educational circumstances?

See what the AMA *Code of Medical Ethics* says about this topic in Opinion 3.09 Medical Students performing procedures on fellow students. American Medical Association. *Code of Medical Ethics 1998-1999 Edition*. Chicago, IL: American Medical Association; 1998.

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