CASE AND COMMENTARY
Medical Student Exposure to TB
Commentary by Audiey Kao, MD, PhD

Case
Brad is a third-year medical student who is on his internal medicine rotation. During the rotation, Brad learns that a patient whom he saw and admitted from the emergency room was diagnosed with active tuberculosis (TB). Brad was subsequently put on a regimen of isoniazid (INH) because he tested positive for TB exposure. After being on INH for 2 weeks, Brad experienced extreme fatigue, nausea, and diarrhea. With challenging clinical rotations coming up, Brad feels that he needs his full energy to get through the rotations and discontinues the therapy. He rationalizes that being infected with TB does not necessarily mean that he would get full-blown TB. If pulmonary symptoms ever arise, he will then seek medical attention.

Questions for Discussion
1. What do you think of Brad’s behavior?
2. Is Brad potentially putting his fellow colleagues and patients at risk?


Audiey Kao, MD, PhD is editor in chief of Virtual Mentor.

The people and events in this case are fictional. Resemblance to real events or to names of people, living or dead, is entirely coincidental. The viewpoints expressed on this site are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views and policies of the AMA.

Copyright 2000 American Medical Association. All rights reserved.