

Virtual Mentor

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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?

See what the AMA *Code of Medical Ethics* says about this topic in Opinion 9.12 Physicians and infectious diseases. American Medical Association. *Code of Medical Ethics 1998-1999 Edition*. Chicago, IL: American Medical Association; 1998.

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

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