

Patrick has the Pox

In each scenario you will need to provide a brief 1-2minute summary of what you have learnt.

Put yourself in the characters shoes and try to reflect on the situation before during and after the dilemma

Patrick has been feeling unwell for 2 days. On day 3 he developed a rash all over his body. Patrick thinks that his skin is just reacting to a new detergent.

Unfortunately on placement he comes into contact with an immunocompromised patient. They catch chicken pox and later die

Thinking points

If Patrick was in his first year of medicine....

- Should he have known he had chicken pox?
- If he was just generally unwell with a mild rash were his actions reasonable or should medical students see a doctor every time they are unwell?

Now consider the possibility that Patrick was in his final year...

- Is he now more responsible for not realising he had chicken pox and being more aware of the consequences?

Patrick regrets his actions and is devastated at the consequences. He blames himself and is struggling to make sense of what happened.

What should Patrick do now?

If Patrick was your friend what advice would you give him?

33 You should be aware that some conditions that are usually minor such as the common cold – may have a disproportionate impact on some patients, for example those with compromised immune systems.

You need to bear this in mind when you decide whether to go to a placement if you are unwell.

Achieving good medical practice: guidance for medical students

Steven's Sharps injury

In each scenario you will need to provide a brief 1-2minute summary of what you have learnt.

Put yourself in the characters shoes and try to reflect on the situation before during and after the dilemma

Steven is a fourth year medical student. He is asked by a consultant to cannulate a patient. During the procedure he sustains a needle stick injury. He is eager to impress this consultant, and does not want to seem incompetent so he does not tell anyone about his injury. When he has a spare moment he lets the wound bleed and rinses his finger under running water.

In 1st year when he was initially screened by occupational health he had no blood borne illnesses.

Thinking points

1. What are the risks to Steven?
2. What are the risks to the patient?

Three months later Steven remembers his injury and is worried that he might have hepatitis or HIV. Unfortunately he does not remember the patient's name, or know what to do

What do you think will happen next?

34 You must comply with the occupational health policies and procedures of your medical school or university

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Helga is Homesick

In each scenario you will need to provide a brief 1-2minute summary of what you have learnt.

Put yourself in the characters shoes and try to reflect on the situation before during and after the dilemma

Helga is a first year international student. She finds her first term in England very challenging. She is homesick and no longer top of her class.

Each night she lies awake worrying she is going to fail and let her parents down, wasting all the money they invested in her education.

After a while she stops going to lectures as she feels it is pointless and she does not want to be around those who are smarter than her.

Christina her flatmate cares and is worried about Helga. She does not want her friend to fail so she spends hours making flash cards and trying to teach Helga the lecture content.

Thinking points

- What is the impact to herself and those around her?
- Is Helga showing insight into her condition?
- What would the student with perfect insight do?

32 As a medical student, both during study and on a placement, you're likely to experience situations that will have an emotional impact on you. At times, you may experience stress and anxiety. This is completely normal and your medical school will support you with safe ways to share and reflect on difficult experiences. But if you are concerned about your levels of anxiety, you should seek help from your general practitioner (GP) and other appropriate sources (for example, helplines) to address any issues at an early stage. This may include making adjustments to your training or practice, if necessary.

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Darcy's Diabetes

In each scenario you will need to provide a brief 1-2minute summary of what you have learnt.

Put yourself in the characters shoes and try to reflect on the situation before during and after the dilemma

Darcy has had type 1 diabetes since she was 4. She is currently enjoying her surgical placement. Many of the cases are long and Darcy does not feel comfortable enough to ask for breaks to check her blood glucose levels and give herself insulin if needed.

Three weeks into the placement she notices that her previously well controlled diabetes is now badly managed. She also notices that she has lost some weight, and she likes this side effect.

Her friends notice and they try to talk to her about it, she gets defensive and says it's her life, so her choice.

Thinking points.

There are several ways this could go from being fairly inconsequential to having a significant impact on her career.

As a result of her poorly controlled diabetes she feels tired and this has an impact on her revision. In her exams she does not do as well as she expected. Over summer her diabetes control improves and life for Darcy goes back to normal.



Darcy gets caught up in losing weight and rarely takes her insulin. She is found unconscious and in DKA(diabetic ketoacidosis). She is advised to withdraw from medical school in order to focus on her health.

- Although nothing happened in this scenario, can you think of ways Darcy's actions could have had a negative impact on patient care?
- Doctors are supposed to seek help, when they are struggling. When Darcy found herself struggling to manage her diabetes and surgical placement who should she have gone to for help?

Fitness to Practise Concerns may include:

- Refusal to follow medical advice or care plans, or to comply with arrangements for monitoring and reviews
- Failure to comply with reasonable adjustments to ensure patient safety

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