

# SECOND VICTIM EXPOSURE AND RESULTANT IMPACT ON PATIENT SAFETY PERCEPTIONS

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## ABSTRACT

Health care providers face a multitude of challenging demands within a high-stress clinical setting to practice their chosen profession. These providers have strong emotional defenses that carry them through their busy work days which allow them to ‘get the job done’. However, when the patient under their watch experiences an unanticipated clinical event it can shake even the most resilient of clinicians. Clinicians experiencing this type of emotional response in the aftermath of an unanticipated clinical event have become known as ‘second victims’. Only within the past decade has the impact of such events on the health care provider been recognized.

A comprehensive adverse event response plan for staff members who may be suffering as second victims is vital for restoring psychosocial and physical health after an event. There is now evidence demonstrating the need for health care institutions to formalize a second victim support network across every worksite to ensure that every healthcare clinician, student or volunteer is monitored for potential second victim reactions. Institutions should design a response plan that results in ongoing surveillance for potential second victims and acts to mitigate emotional suffering immediately upon second victim identification. This study explores the impact of one type of interventional support for the health care second victim on safety perceptions of staff members.