

## Publication

# A Transactional "Second-Victim" Model-Experiences of Affected Healthcare Professionals in Acute-Somatic Inpatient Settings: A Qualitative Meta-synthesis

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"Second victims" are healthcare professionals traumatized by involvement in significant adverse events. Associated burdens, e.g., guilt, can impair professional performance, thereby endangering patient safety. To date, however, a model of second victims' experiences toward a deeper understanding of qualitative studies is missing. Therefore, we aimed to identify, describe, and interpret these experiences in acute-somatic inpatient settings.; This qualitative metasynthesis reflects a systematic literature search of PubMed, CINAHL, and PsycINFO, extended by hand searches and expert consultations. Two researchers independently evaluated qualitative studies in German and English, assessing study quality via internationally approved criteria. Results were analyzed inductively and aggregated quantitatively.; Based on 19 qualitative studies (explorative-descriptive: n = 13; grounded theory: n = 3; phenomenology: n = 3), a model of second-victim experience was drafted. This depicts a multistage developmental process: in appraising their situation, second victims focus on their involvement in an adverse event, and they become traumatized. To restore their integrity, they attempt to understand the event and to act accordingly; however, their reactions are commonly emotional and issue focused. Outcomes include leaving the profession, surviving, or thriving. This development process is alternately modulated by safety culture and healthcare professionals.; For the first time, this model works systematically from the second-victim perspective based on qualitative studies. Based on our findings, we recommend integrating second victims' experiences into safety culture and root-cause analyses. Our transactional model of second-victim experience provides a foundation for strategies to maintain and improve patient safety.

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