



Bite Size Spotlight on the 'Second Victim' term

As a visitor to our website, you may already be aware of the controversy surrounding the term 'Second Victim'. Although the term is commonly used, the connotations it evokes continue to be debated among patients and families/carers affected by patient safety incidents (PSIs), healthcare policy makers, arm's length and professional bodies and healthcare professionals themselves.

When developing this website back in 2018, we were sensitive to this debate, and considered at length the potential difficulties of adopting the term 'second victim' as our website name. On balance, we decided to use this term because it is widely used and recognised within the international research literature. We were also unable to find an alternative term (at least one that was short enough for a web address), despite running workshops with healthcare staff, managers and patients. However, we are still unsure if the term itself might deter people from visiting and accessing the website resources. Whilst this may be happening, people are using the website: we have had an average of 10,600 visitors annually since launching the site, and some NHS trusts regularly signpost staff who have been involved in PSIs to the website for information and support.

Our aim is to make the information available within the webpages accessible to all and ensure it reaches the healthcare staff who need it most. So, we will keep working to understand the objections to the term 'second victim' and identify alternatives. In the meantime, we hope that by reading the information and research contained on our site, visitors will come away with a deeper appreciation of why healthcare staff involved in a PSI require support. We hope that it also allows people to view PSIs from the perspective of healthcare staff. It is only then that we will be able to support improvement in access to and support available for healthcare staff impacted by involvement in a PSI.

For those who would like a deeper understanding of the complexity of the 'second victim' term, we have written a spotlight piece which aims to:

1. Outline the origins of the 'second victim' term
2. Reflect on some of the main objections to it and the related consequences
3. Outline work undertaken to try and identify more acceptable term
4. Term aside, demonstrate the need to support healthcare staff involved in a PSI
5. Make recommendations which, if enacted, will improve support for ALL involved in a PSI

To read this spotlight piece click [here](#).

