

***Some Patients Leave a Scar on You:***  
*Mitigating the Personal Impact of Adverse Outcomes*

John F Eidt MD  
Baylor Scott and White, Dallas



**Disclosures**

No relevant financial conflicts  
I am NOT a psychologist/psychiatrist



**Time Out**



We all have patients that have left an indelible mark on us. The asymptomatic carotid that has a stroke in the recovery room. The routine EVAR that goes bad. The claudicant that has an amputation.

In vascular surgery our actions, and inactions, have immediate consequences. There is no delay like recurrent cancer. And there is no shifting blame.

Our memories may be vivid and precise, filled with details like a patient's middle name, children's faces, and spouse's occupation. Sometimes we can see the operation like it was yesterday. In other cases, we just see fragments, ghosts that haunt our memories and invade our dreams. But we never fully forget."

John Eidt, Vascular Specialist, 2020

**The Surgeon as the Second Victim? Results of the Boston Intraoperative Adverse Events Surgeons' Attitude (BISA) Study**

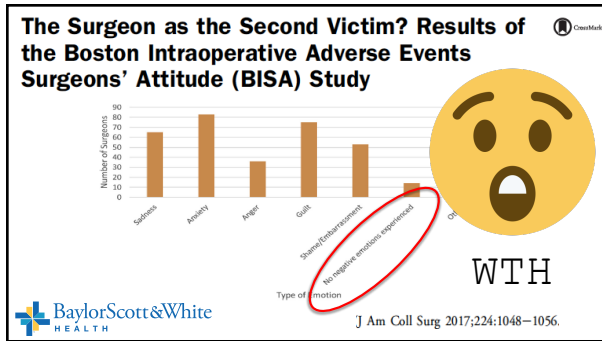


Kelsey Han, AB, Jordan D Bohnen, MD, MBA, Thomas Peponis, MD, Myriam Martinez, MD, Anirudh Nandan, BA, Daniel D Yeh, MD, FACS, Jarone Lee, MD, Marc Demoya, MD, George Velmahos, MD, PhD, FACS, Haytham MA Kaafarani, MD, MPH, FACS

N=126/281 (45%) response  
Age mean – 49  
Male – 77%

J Am Coll Surg 2017;224:1048–1056.





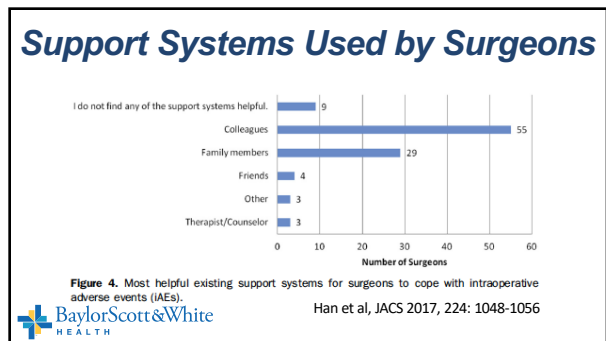
1. >90% of surgeons report emotional impact of adverse surgical outcomes
  2. Anger, anxiety, guilt, shame, sadness, self-doubt, isolation and frustration
  3. Interference with sleep, cognition, leisure
  4. Changes in practice -
- Potential consequences of patient complications for surgeon well-being: a systematic review. Srinivasa et al, JAMA Surgery 2019



### What do you do in response to an adverse outcome?

- Keep it to yourself
- Exercise/arts/music/yoga
- Meditate/pray
- Talk with colleagues
- Confide in your spouse
- Rationalize – publish!!

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### Type of support surgeons want

- Peer to peer
- Confidential
- 24/7
- Longitudinal
- Competent critique




Heiss et al, The unmeasured quality metric: Burn out and the second victim syndrome in healthcare. Sem Ped Surg 2019




### Tiers of Support

- Self compassion
  - Mindfulness, common humanity, self kindness
- “Organic” P-to-P– Battlefield First Aid
- Structured P-to-P
  - Society, Hospital or Department
- Professional
  - Psychology, psychiatry referral



### What should you do when a colleague experiences a “bad case”?

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Do reach out</li> <li>Do listen</li> <li>Do offer support</li> <li>Do provide acceptance</li> <li>Do offer trust</li> <li>Do assure confidentiality</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Don't isolate the individual</li> <li>Don't pry</li> <li>Don't try to place blame</li> <li>Don't try to “fix” it</li> <li>Don't second guess</li> <li>Don't minimize</li> <li>Don't give false reassurance</li> </ul>
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From the Society for Clinical Vascular Surgery [Check for updates](#)

### A toolkit for individualizing interventions to mitigate second-victim syndrome in a diverse surgery community

John F. Eidt, MD,<sup>1,2</sup> and Kristyn Mannola, MD,<sup>1</sup> Dallas and College Station, TX, and Lorna Linda, CA

**ABSTRACT**  
Adverse outcomes are an inevitable consequence of surgical care. The term “second victim” was introduced by Wu to describe the emotional trauma experienced by a clinician who feels responsibility for an adverse clinical outcome. Second victims may feel shame, guilt, sadness, and a crisis of confidence. Surgeons rarely seek professional support following an adverse event but are more likely to confide in colleagues. Surgeons who represent groups traditionally underrepresented in medicine may be less likely to seek assistance following an adverse clinical outcome. There is a need for surgeons to have sufficient training to provide peer-to-peer support for wounded colleagues. The PEARLS Toolkit provides a blueprint toward this end. (J Vasc Surg Venous Lymphat Disord 2024;32:1016-60.)

**Keywords:** Adverse outcomes; Diversity; Peer support; Second victim syndrome; Toolkit



### Peer to Peer Support Toolkit



- Patient
- Emotional support
- Apology/Disclosure
- Review
- Legal
- Safety



### Summary

Adverse outcomes have significant impact on physician well-being

Surgeons rarely utilize institutional resources

Peer-to-peer support is preferred

“First Aid Kit” provides framework for Peer to Peer support

We owe it to each other

