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Core set of indicators to evaluate healthcare workers support programmes: a consensus-based approach

Paulo Sousa

S Guerra-Paiva¹, I Carrillo², JJ Mira^{2,3}, J Fernandes⁴, R Strametz⁵, E Gil-Hernández³, P Sousa¹

¹Public Health Research Centre, CHRC, NOVA National School of Public Health, Lisbon, Portugal

²Health Psychology Department, Miguel Hernandez University, Elche, Spain

³FISABIO, Alicante-Sant Joan Health District, Alicante, Spain

⁴NOVA National School of Public Health, Lisbon, Portugal

⁵Wiesbaden Institute for Healthcare Economics and Patient Safety, Wiesbaden, Germany

Contact: Paulo.Sousa@ensp.unl.pt

Objectives: Considering the widespread implementation of support programmes for healthcare workers (HCWs), there is an urgent need to establish a standardised set of indicators for their ongoing assessment. This study seeks to develop a consensus framework for evaluating interventions aimed at supporting HCWs affected by patient safety incidents (PSIs) or other distressing situations, commonly referred to as second victims (SVs). Having a core set of indicators it is crucial for facilitating comparative analyses across different organisations and time periods.

Methods: A qualitative study was conducted from June 2023 to March 2024. The study involved a multidisciplinary group of members part of the European Researchers Network Working on Second Victims. The consensus-building process utilised insights from a scoping review (phase 0) and a nominal group technique (phase 1) to develop a questionnaire for Delphi Rounds (phase 2). Indicators were rated on a scale of 1-5, with consensus reached if over 70% of participants rated an indicator as both feasible and sensitive scoring above 4. A consensus conference was subsequently organised.

Results: From an initial pool of 91 indicators, 55 were rated online, with 35 progressing to the Delphi rounds. A total of two Delphi rounds were performed and achieved response rates exceeding 60% and 80% respectively, resulting in consensus on 11 indicators for evaluating SV' support programmes. These indicators encompass various aspects such as awareness and activation of the programmes, organisational processes and structures, institutional training provisions and assessment of the impact of the programme in the SVs.

Conclusions: This study endeavors to provide guidance for future SVs' programs namely in the critical areas of programme's awareness and activation, structural and process enhancements, and programme's impact on SVs. Moreover, these indicators are suitable for multiple healthcare contexts and levels of implementation.

Key messages:

- The priorities for evaluation of second victim programmes' include their impact on healthcare workers, awareness and activation, organisational processes and structures and institutional training.
- Utilizing a multidisciplinary consensus approach, we defined a set of indicators that are adaptable to diverse contexts that provide care and varying levels of second victim support implementation.