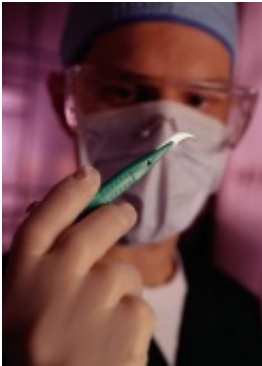


Surgeons emotionally affected by surgical complications

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(HealthDay)—Many surgeons are profoundly emotionally affected by surgical complications, according to a study published in the December issue of the *British Journal of Surgery*.

Anna Pinto, Ph.D., from Imperial College London, and colleagues assessed the personal and professional impact of [surgical complications](#) on surgeons using data from semistructured, individual interviews conducted with 27 general and vascular surgeons, consultants, and senior registrars from two National Health Service organizations in London.

The researchers found that many surgeons were seriously affected by major surgical complications, with surgeons' practice often affected too, not always in their patients' best interest. The preventability of the

complications, the surgeon's personality and experience, [patient outcomes](#) and patients' reactions, colleagues' reactions, and the culture of the institution all affected surgeons' reactions. The most commonly cited coping mechanisms were discussing complications, deconstructing the incidents, and rationalizing. Participants often reported the existence of strong institutional blame cultures and generally described institutional support as inadequate. Better mentoring, teamwork approaches, blame-free opportunities for the discussion of complications, and structures aimed at the human aspects of complications were cited as suggestions for supporting surgeons in managing the personal impact of complications.

"Those involved in the management of surgical services need to consider how to improve support for [surgeons](#) in the aftermath of major surgical incidents," the authors write.

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