

# Blame common in patient safety incident reports

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(HealthDay)—Blame is a common element in family practice patient

safety incident reports, according to a study published in the September/October issue of the *Annals of Family Medicine*.

Jennifer Cooper, M.B.B.Ch., from Cardiff University in the United Kingdom, and colleagues characterized a random sample of family practice patient safety incident reports using data from the England and Wales National Reporting and Learning System. Reports were analyzed according to prespecified classification systems and used a taxonomy of blame attribution.

The researchers found that [health care](#) professionals making family practice incident reports attributed blame to a person in 45 percent of cases (975 of 2,148). Fault was attributed to another person in 36 percent of cases, while personal responsibility was acknowledged in 2 percent. Blame was commonly seen with incidents where a complaint was anticipated.

"The high frequency of blame in these safety incident reports may reflect a health care culture that leads to blame and retribution, rather than to identifying areas for learning and improvement, and a failure to appreciate the contribution of system factors in others' behavior," the authors write.

One author disclosed serving as a paid consultant on incident reporting issues.

**More information:** [Abstract](#)  
[Full Text](#)

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