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Understanding the back patient. A systematic review based on thematic analysis.

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Introduction: A thorough review of qualitative studies has revealed that telling about experiences and perceptions is important for back patients in order to feel accepted and acknowledged.

Thus, it has been the aim of this qualitative literature review to investigate what it feels like to be a back patient and what back patients consider important when dealing with the healthcare system.

Methods: The method draws on James Thomas' and Angela Hardens approach in "Methods for the thematic synthesis of qualitative research in systematic reviews" (2008). The thematic synthesis aims to systematise and integrate findings of qualitative studies.

Results: The analysis reveals that many back patients feel that their experiences and perceptions are ignored by the health professionals, who are often concerned about identifying the cause. This can result in patients feeling mistrusted, marginalised and reluctant to speak out. Therefore, telling about experiences and perceptions is important for back patients in order to feel accepted and acknowledged. The health professionals must incorporate the patients' narratives as an integral part of the care and treatment.

Conclusions: In order to acknowledge the back patient the narrative must be complemented by a different perspective that includes the issue of ethical responsibility. It is therefore also a question of adopting certain norms as binding; to be bound by obligation or loyalty. Thus, the literature review argues for a more process-oriented patient approach that incorporates patients' narratives as an integral and ethical part of the care and treatment.