**Tittel:** Patient safety as perceived by Swedish leaders  
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**Sammendrag:**  
The purpose of this paper is to survey Swedish healthcare leaders' patient safety awareness, the priority they give to safety issues and their views on suitable safety management strategies. A total 623 leaders of a sample of 1,129 responded to a mail questionnaire (55% response rate). Descriptive statistics of the responses are presented as frequency distributions across respondent subgroups. Means were tested for similarity by a repetitive one-way ANOVA procedure. Homogeneous response groups were sought by hierarchical cluster analysis. Swedish healthcare leaders show relatively high safety awareness and how their organizations prioritize safety management. There is a marked polarization between leaders; half feel that the system works reasonably well, and that adequate funds are available to improve or maintain services. The other half thinks the system needs major change and calls for additional funding. A majority sees system errors as the main cause for adverse events; a substantial minority find human errors to be more important. Two-thirds were willing to make safety performance information on organizations and specialties public, one third was restrictive. Survey instruments used to explore leaders' patient safety views have not yet been rigorously tested against psychometric criteria. One hospital type was slightly over-represented and three regions somewhat under-represented in the respondent groups. This is the first systematic attempt to explore the views of Swedish healthcare leaders on patient safety. It provides input to a national strategy to improve patient safety.

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**Relevant lenke:** 10.1108/09526860910944656