

# BD DAYS – Sepsis:

Sepsis in Europe - Public policy across health care systems

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**Moderator Mr José Luis Gómez,**  
Vice President, BD Public Policy  
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**Prof Dr med Konrad Reinhart,**  
Chair, Global Sepsis Alliance,  
Jena, Germany

**Ms Melina Raso,** Executive Director,  
Health First Europe, Brussels, Belgium

**Dr Ron Daniels,** CEO, Global Sepsis  
Alliance; Founder and CEO,  
UK Sepsis Trust, Birmingham,  
United Kingdom

**Dr Giulio Toccafondi,** Patient Safety and Quality Manager, Centre for Clinical Risk Management, Florence, Italy

**Dr Ricard Ferrer,** Head of the Intensive Care Department, Vall d'Hebron Hospital, Barcelona, Spain;

**Chairman, European Society of Intensive Care Medicine (ESICM) Systemic Inflammation and Sepsis section;**  
**President, Spanish Society of Intensive Care**



## Lobbying regionally<sup>1</sup>

Mr Gómez opened the panel discussion by mentioning the European Parliament's latest resolution on antimicrobial resistance (AMR) included a section on sepsis. Prof Reinhart would like the European Union (E.U.) to ask member states to adopt the World Health Organisation (WHO) resolution on sepsis<sup>2</sup>. He has had discussions with the European Commissioner for Health and Food Safety and the President of the European Commission to collaborate on different policy initiatives. Health First Europe has been actively lobbying the European Parliament to make sure sepsis is on the E.U. agenda for the next five years. Ms Raso explained that health is a national competency and the E.U. has limited competence in this sector. However, the E.U. has the ability to promote a European-wide epidemiological study, run a pilot programme on a specific public health issue and they can also support member states in setting up national programmes. Health First Europe hosted a round table debate at the European Parliament called #STOPSEPSISEU on 20 September 2019. The aim is to drive engagement among policy makers and healthcare leaders.

## Collecting data<sup>1,3</sup>

Prof Reinhart spoke of the importance of having data when trying to convince policy makers at the global and regional levels. This is how the Global Sepsis Alliance persuaded the WHO to develop its resolution on sepsis. The European Sepsis Alliance is working with E.U. leaders to convince them of the need for a study to evaluate the true burden of sepsis in Europe, but also AMR. Prof Reinhart is also leading a European-wide study on blood culture. Mr Gómez emphasised the lack of data on sepsis incidence and mortality in Europe.

Mr Daniels of the U.K. Sepsis Trust is working with the National Health Service (NHS) to gather all sepsis-related data into a national registry. When data from this registry is combined with other national registries across Europe, we will be able to provide better individualised sepsis care.

In Spain, Dr Ferrer's team carries out a one-month prospective study on administrative data each year to evaluate their sepsis code. In Italy, Dr Toccafondi also uses administrative data to identify problems in the International Statistical Classification of Diseases and Related Health Problems (ICD) of sepsis.

## Raising awareness<sup>1,3</sup>

According to Prof Reinhart, the Global Sepsis Alliance will be hosting a joint congress with the WHO in February 2020. Health

First Europe is launching a multi-level awareness campaign. The U.K. Sepsis Alliance developed a campaign called "Just Ask, Could it be Sepsis?" using large-format advertising, television and milk bottle labelling to spread the message. In Italy, Dr Toccafondi explained that they are encouraging patients and survivors to get involved in raising awareness by participating in Tuscany Sepsis Day and citizen councils. He also spoke of the importance of educating and empowering non-intensivist healthcare professionals (HCPs) to become sepsis champions. Dr Ferrer mentioned several awareness-raising activities that are being organised in Spain: a bicycle race called the Sepsis Challenge and a television programme to raise funds for sepsis research. These activities are driven mostly by patients.

## Improving sepsis care<sup>1,3</sup>

In May 2018, Health First Europe founded the European Network for Safer Healthcare, a group of HCPs and associations committed to keeping everyone safe in healthcare settings<sup>4</sup>. Prof Reinhart mentioned using data on diagnostic delays to improve sepsis care in Europe.

U.K. Sepsis Alliance created the Sepsis Six in 2005 "as a bedside tool to help (often junior) health professionals deliver the basics of care rapidly and reliably<sup>5</sup>." They also developed simple clinical pathways with the U.K. National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE). If a patient has certain risk factors, a sepsis alert is triggered. These two organisations have also collaborated on guidelines and quality standards for sepsis. Dr Toccafondi led a team to develop a document called *FIGHT AGAINST SEPSIS* > Call to Action to educate HCPs on the link between infection and sepsis. To speed up early detection, they created Please React, a programme that aims at identifying sepsis in the ambulance before the patient reaches the emergency department. In northern Tuscany, Dr Toccafondi's team is setting up a surgical infection control programme to prevent surgical site infections. They are also building a network between clinical microbiology and infection control stakeholders to encourage antimicrobial stewardship and the rapid identification and management of sepsis.

Dr Ferrer explained that Spain does not have a national sepsis code yet. Each region has its own sepsis code. He worked on the Catalan sepsis code, which uses three levels of care. When the code is triggered, the patient is transferred to the Intensive Care Unit quickly. Mr Gómez concluded the panel discussion by saying all these efforts at the regional and national levels will hopefully save many lives in Europe.

### References

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2. World Health Assembly resolution WHA70.7, *Improving the prevention, diagnosis and clinical management of sepsis* (29 May 2017). Accessed on 13 September 2019, at [http://apps.who.int/gb/ebwha/pdf\\_files/WHA70/A70\\_R7-en.pdf?ua=1](http://apps.who.int/gb/ebwha/pdf_files/WHA70/A70_R7-en.pdf?ua=1).
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