A Call to Action

The European Sepsis Alliance annual event has reached its third edition and we have come a long way since the launch in 2018. The WHO, the European Commission, and some national authorities have recognized the enormous burden of sepsis for public health and the importance of supporting the fight against sepsis. The event will provide an opportunity to hear from policy makers about how sepsis can be inserted and prioritized in the public health agenda, listen to updates by experts on the frontlines of sepsis research and medical care in different counties that have undertaken necessary action, and significant steps and discuss with survivors and experts what it takes to fight sepsis effectively.

Sepsis – The Number One Cause of Preventable Death

Sepsis arises when the body’s response to an infection injures its own tissues and organs. It may lead to shock, multi-organ failure, disability and death, especially if not recognized early and treated promptly. As it has been reported, the SARS Cov-2 Virus is “just” a new virus that can cause sepsis.

The Global Burden of Disease Sepsis Report, published in January 2020, estimated that 49 million cases of sepsis happen every year, with 11 million people dying. Twenty percent of all worldwide deaths are associated with sepsis.

What Is Happening in Europe

As the results of a Swedish study from 2016 suggest, around 700 per 100 000 people in Europe are affected by sepsis each year. Some countries and regions have started taking encouraging actions, but it is not enough yet. We need to engage with more stakeholders to ensure that sepsis becomes a priority in the public health agenda in all European countries.

The objective of the ESA advocacy strategy is to raise awareness of sepsis across all target audiences, trigger public policy actions to improve sepsis prevention, and emphasize the need to treat sepsis as an emergency like a myocardial infarction or a stroke. The current COVID-19 pandemic prompts us to remember that the fight against sepsis must become an integral part of any national health strategy as highlighted in the 2017 WHO Sepsis Resolution. Furthermore, we need more data and collective efforts to better understand the epidemiology and quality of sepsis management on the European and member state level.