

## Sepsis a leading cause of death and disability in Europe A call to action

Sepsis is the most severe complication of infections and a leading cause of preventable deaths and disability in Europe. Every minute more than one person dies of sepsis in Europe and three quarters of the 2.8 million survivors affected suffer long-term sequelae. Sepsis can affect people at any age. Worldwide the relative amount of healthcare budget spent on sepsis was 2.65% (range 8.85% - 0.29%) which equals 0.33% of the gross national product (GNP). Vaccination, clean care, early recognition and treatment as an emergency are key to prevent sepsis.

Most deaths by COVID-19 were attributable to viral sepsis. This pandemic confirmed the crucial role of modern vaccines, fast diagnostic tools and immunomodulatory approaches to fight sepsis. But it also revealed the existence of numerous barriers for the timely evaluation of the effectiveness and safety of these tools by the conduct of clinical studies.

The 2017 WHA 70.7 sepsis resolution urges WHO member states to integrate sepsis in their national health systems and to strengthen early detection, diagnosis and therapies. In addition, in 2022 the G7 ministers of health and leaders, committed to foster the implementation of this resolution and to ensure synergies with strategies against antimicrobial resistance and infection prevention and controls (IPC) programmes. So far [only a minority of European countries](#) have integrated sepsis in their national health strategies.

The European Sepsis Alliance urgently calls the European Commission, the European Parliament and the member states, to address this public health threat and to take the following measures within their respective remits:

1. Reduction of bureaucratic hurdles and financial support to promote patient-oriented clinical research on sepsis by the Health Emergency Preparedness and Response Authority (HERA), similarly to what is done by Biomedical Advanced Research and Development Authority (BARDA) in the US, and via the Horizon Europe programme. Inclusion of sepsis as a priority in the work plan of the European Center for Disease Control (ECDC).
2. Funding public awareness campaigns on sepsis, similar to those for sexually transmitted diseases.
3. Mandatory inclusion of infection control and early sepsis detection notions in first aid courses and schools curricula in all European member states.
4. Legislative measures to introduce and implement evidence-based quality improvement measures in hospitals, such as multidisciplinary medical emergency teams in combination with hospital-wide training of medical staff on the early detection and treatment of sepsis and acutely life-threatening illnesses.
5. Provision of timely pathogen, antimicrobial resistance and sepsis diagnostics in all hospitals for emergency and acute care 24/7.
6. Regulations for the integration and optimisation of early sepsis detection in outpatient, pre-hospital emergency medical care and emergency departments.
7. Comprehensive treatment programmes and research for long-term effects of sepsis, COVID-19, and other infectious diseases on the European and national level.
8. Addressing the burden of sepsis and the synergies with the fight against AMR in the upcoming European Council Recommendations on AMR, and in the agendas of the competent parliamentary committees.