



PRESS RELEASE

For immediate release

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World Sepsis Day 2021, September 13th: COVID-19 exacerbates the burden of sepsis, but solutions to mitigate it are there, and must be urgently embraced by health systems.

This year's World Sepsis Day occurs at a stage where, among 210 million COVID-19 survivors, a large proportion of them have developed or are at risk of developing long-Covid symptoms. Among the most common ones are fatigue, muscle weakness, difficulties of breathing and cognitive impairment, which can last for months¹.

Sepsis - the life-threatening body response to an infection - affects 52% of hospitalized COVID-19 patients and 78% of those in ICU². After hospital-treated sepsis, up to 75% of survivors suffer from new diseases and 32% are newly dependent on nursing care³. Every second COVID-19 patient reports at least one new symptom after four months⁴.

"This demonstrate once more that sepsis must be a priority for every national health system and for the work programs of international organizations such as, for example, WHO, European Commission, ASEAN, African Union, G20, G7 and others. The response to the pandemic by healthcare providers, government and authorities has been unprecedented. The world must have the same vigorous response regarding sepsis", says Niranjana 'Tex' Kissoon, GSA President.

In 2017 the World Health Assembly approved the Resolution 70.7 urging member states to integrate sepsis in their public health systems. Despite some remarkable progress, to date too few countries have made significant steps in this direction.

"This is the second World Sepsis Day that is celebrated during a pandemic that is only increasing exponentially the already heavy toll of sepsis globally. We call on national governments to urgently take on concrete actions such as setting up

¹ Huang C, Huang L, Wang Y et al. (2021) 6-month consequences of COVID-19 in patients discharged from hospital: a cohort study. Lancet 397:220-232

² Karakike, Eleni MD1; Giamarellos-Bourboulis, Evangelos J. MD, PhD1; Kyprianou, Miltiades BSc1; Fleischmann-Struzek, Carolin MD, PhD2,3; Pletz, Mathias W. MD, PhD2; Netea, Mihai G. MD, PhD4,5; Reinhart, Konrad MD, PhD6; Kyriazopoulou, Evdokia MD, PhD1 Coronavirus Disease 2019 as Cause of Viral Sepsis, Critical Care Medicine: July 12, 2021 - Volume - Issue - doi: 10.1097/CCM.00000000000005195

³ Fleischmann-Struzek C, Rose N, Freytag A et al. (2021) Epidemiology and costs of post-sepsis morbidity, nursing care dependency, and mortality in Germany. medRxiv:2021.2002.2025.21252347

⁴ Chopra V, Flanders SA, O'Malley M, et al. (2021) Sixty-Day Outcomes Among Patients Hospitalized With COVID-19. Ann Intern Med 174: 576-578

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We support
World Sepsis Day – September 13
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national action plans on sepsis. Best practices from around the world⁵ teach us that national or regional guidelines, improved ICD coding, infection prevention and control measures and education programs, are some of the most effective measures to be put in place to fight sepsis and save lives.”, continues Kissoon.

As recently argued by GSA⁶, a stronger attention should be allocated to sepsis in children. Beside a surge of cases of COVID-19 - the United States recorded an increase of 84% in one week and 45% of infected children had no underlying conditions⁷ - mortality and morbidity for sepsis in children worldwide is increasing, which is further aggravated by the cessation of immunization programs and food insecurity in many parts of the world.

The burden of sepsis affects the society at large. A report published today by The George Institute for Global Health estimates that the total annual cost of sepsis in Australia is \$4.8bn with direct hospital costs accounting for \$700m a year, more than for breast and lung cancer combined.

Other available data reveal, for example, that the average treatment for a single patient in France costs about € 16,000⁸ and in Germany sepsis treatment amounts to about 3% of the total healthcare budget (i.e., more than € 9 billion⁹).

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⁵ <https://www.europeansepsisalliance.org/news/2021/9/9/the-first-esa-european-sepsis-report>

⁶ <https://journals.physiology.org/doi/pdf/10.1152/ajplung.00331.2021>

⁷ <https://www.aap.org/en/pages/2019-novel-coronavirus-covid-19-infections/children-and-covid-19-state-level-data-report/>

⁸ Dupuis, C., Bouadma, L., Ruckly, S. et al. Sepsis and septic shock in France: incidences, outcomes and costs of care. *Ann. Intensive Care* 10, 145 (2020). <https://doi.org/10.1186/s13613-020-00760-x>

⁹ Fleischmann, C., Hartmann, M., Hartog, C. et al. Epidemiology of Sepsis in Germany: Incidence, Mortality And Associated Costs of Care 2007-2013. *ICMx* 3, A50 (2015). <https://doi.org/10.1186/2197-425X-3-S1-A50>