

ACTION DEMANDED ON WORLD'S OLDEST KILLER

'Barcelona Declaration' Aims to Tackle 10th Most Common Cause of Death

Barcelona, Spain, 2nd October 2002: Intensive care professionals from around the globe called today for concerted action to reduce the number of deaths from one of the world's oldest and most virulent killers – sepsis. It is estimated that worldwide, 1,400 people die each day from sepsis (1), with up to 30% dying within one month of diagnosis (2-6). Comparatively, more people die from sepsis than from breast or colon cancer (7).

The 'Barcelona Declaration' is the debut initiative of the newly formed 'Surviving Sepsis Campaign' which brings together, for the first time, three leading professional organizations in the field of sepsis (the European Society of Intensive Care Medicine, the Society of Critical Care Medicine, and the International Sepsis Forum). Professionals meeting at the 15th Annual Congress of the European Society of Intensive Care Medicine agreed that improvements in the recognition and treatment of sepsis are essential to reduce the high mortality rate associated with the condition by 25% over the next 5 years.

Formerly known as 'blood poisoning', sepsis is a syndrome characterized by an overwhelming systemic response by the body to infection, which can rapidly lead to organ failure and, ultimately, death. Sepsis may cause multiple organs in the body to fail and trigger the onset of both abnormal clotting and bleeding. It can strike anyone but is most likely to develop from infection associated with pneumonia, trauma, surgery, burns, or conditions such as cancer and AIDS. In fact, 80% of patients who die from major injuries are actually killed by sepsis.

"We have the technology and resources today to treat most conditions and injuries yet infection, which has been killing people since history began, still defeats us," said Prof. Graham Ramsay, ESICM President. "Physicians have tried their best to tackle the scourge of sepsis but without greater resources, education, and awareness, their efforts can only have limited success."

Endorsed by intensive care professionals around the world, the 'Barcelona Declaration' urges governments and healthcare providers to recognize the growing burden of sepsis and to commit to providing adequate resources to combat it. For healthcare professionals, a five-point action plan aims to improve the management of sepsis and save lives by addressing the following:

- *Diagnosis* - Facilitate early and accurate diagnosis through the adoption of one, single, clear definition of sepsis.
- *Treatment* - Ensure appropriate and timely use of treatments and interventions via consistent clinical protocols.
- *Referral* - Recognize universally acceptable referral guidelines in all countries of the world.
- *Education* - Provide leadership, support, and information to clinicians about sepsis management.
- *Counseling* - Post-ICU care and counseling for sepsis patients to ensure continuous quality care by providing a framework for improving and accelerating access to post-ICU care and counseling for patients.

"Advances in critical care have been among some of the most dramatic in medicine," commented Prof. Mitchell Levy, governing council, of the SCCM, "but we are well aware that a comprehensive program of education and action by policy makers and the medical community could significantly reduce the number of deaths caused by sepsis each year."

References

1. Bone RC, et al. *Chest*. 1992;101:1644–1655.
2. Rivers E, et al. *N Engl J Med*. 2001;345:1368–1377.
3. Natanson C, et al. *Crit Care Med*. 1998;26:1927–1931.
4. Briegel J, et al. *Clin Invest*. 1994;72:782–787.
5. Bollaert PE, et al. *Crit Care Med*. 1998; 26: 645–50.
6. Bernard GR, et al. *N Engl J Med*. 2001;344:699–709.
7. OECD Health Report. 2001.