Early Identification of Sepsis Saves Lives

Sepsis is the body’s inflammatory reaction to an infection, illness or injury.¹

This serious health care condition can be life threatening.²

Lives can be saved if sepsis is recognized and treated early.¹

A screening tool can help identify patients with possible sepsis so that treatment can begin immediately.³

It is helpful to think of sepsis as a progression starting with a localized infection that triggers a systemic response, called Systemic Inflammatory Response Syndrome (SIRS).⁴ Any type of infection can lead to sepsis, whether it is bacterial, viral or fungal. The most likely varieties include pneumonia, abdominal infection, kidney infection or bloodstream infection.³ Once the patient experiences organ dysfunction due to sepsis, he or she then has the clinical diagnosis of severe sepsis. Further progression leads to septic shock where hypotension persists despite adequate fluid resuscitation or the lactate remains elevated.² This progression can happen quickly, within hours.

The Surviving Sepsis Campaign guidelines describe how using a screening tool can help to identify a septic patient so that treatment can begin right away. This early intervention will result in improved patient outcomes and mortality rates.³

Together we can make a difference.

Sources
1 Kleinpell, R; Aitken, L; Schorr, C.; Implications of the New International Sepsis Guidelines for Nursing Care; American Journal of Critical Care; May 2013; http://ajcc.aacnjournals.org/content/22/3/212.full
2 UCLA Health Sepsis Initiative; http://sepsis.mednet.ucla.edu/pages/
3 Birriel B; Rapid Identification of Sepsis – The Value of Screening Tools; Critical Connections; 2 April, 2013; http://www.sccm.org/Communications/Critical-Connections/Archives/Pages/Rapid-Identification-of-Sepsis---The-Value-of-Screening-Tools.aspx