

09 September 2014

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Media Release

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RUH on a mission to tackle sepsis

The Royal United Hospital has identified the early recognition and treatment of sepsis as one of its key areas of focus for improvement in 2014/15.

Each year, 37,000 people die from the condition in the UK – more deaths than from breast cancer, bowel cancer and heart attacks combined.

Sepsis occurs when the body's response to an infection damages its own tissues and organs. In severe cases, it can lead to shock, multiple organ failure and death – especially if it is not recognised early and treated promptly.

However, sepsis can be difficult to spot as the signs can be confused with symptoms of more common ailments such as the flu and often patients do not realise that they are unwell until the illness has progressed. Early identification and treatment of sepsis is vital in improving the outcome for patients who have developed the condition.

The RUH trained over 600 staff, in just 60 days as part of a Trust-wide campaign using the 'Sepsis Six' protocol to ensure prompt diagnosis and treatment of the condition.

Dr Lesley Jordan, Lead for Patient Safety at the RUH said: "The campaign was designed to raise awareness across the Trust and prompt all staff to have a high index of suspicion for sepsis and provide them with the necessary tools to implement the essential quick treatment measures.

"We have already seen a large improvement in recognition and early instigation of treatment as a result of the campaign. In addition to the training drive, we have also appointed two dedicated sepsis nurses, who are available across the hospital to help identify the condition and get treatment started as soon as possible. As early diagnosis is so important in successfully treating sepsis, raising public awareness of the condition is of paramount importance. Over the coming year we plan to reach out to our local community to provide them with the knowledge they need to spot this serious illness."

On Friday 12 September the RUH will be celebrating World Sepsis Day, with displays across the hospital site providing information about this potential killer. In addition to this, the RUH will be tweeting (from @RUHBath) the symptoms people need to look out for.

Ends

Notes to Editors:

- The UK Sepsis Trust website is a great source of information of the signs and symptoms of sepsis: www.sepsistrust.org
- Many people can have 'mild' sepsis which can make them feel ill but doesn't require treatment in hospital. Mild sepsis can result from chest infections, urine infections and



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other minor illnesses. However, other patients develop severe sepsis, which means they become seriously ill and need hospital treatment straight away. Early signs of a flu-like illness, chest infection, diarrhoea and vomiting or inability to eat and drink, together with one of the symptoms of sepsis should be taken seriously. The six symptoms the UK Sepsis Trust urge people to look out for are:

Slurred Speech

Extreme shivering or muscle pain

Passing no urine in a day

Severe breathlessness

“I feel like I might die”

Skin mottled or discoloured