

Date: 19.07.16

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Media Release

RUH training campaign launched to combat sepsis danger

A ground-breaking education campaign pioneered at the RUH in Bath is aiming to teach more than 600 staff in 60 days about how to quickly identify and treat the potentially life-threatening condition sepsis.

The RUH's training scheme, first used two years ago, is being relaunched on Monday July 25 to update all staff on the recently published NICE guidelines for sepsis. Other acute hospital Trusts across the South West will also be taking part using the RUH's model.

Dr Lesley Jordan, Consultant Anaesthetist and Patient Safety Lead at the RUH, said: "Sepsis is the body's systemic response to an infection which can result in more serious consequences. It is a time-critical condition but it can be challenging to diagnose as the signs can be similar to other common ailments, like 'flu. Early detection is important in securing the best outcome for patients.

"We developed a ten-minute teaching presentation explaining how to diagnose sepsis and how to treat it within an hour. Then we gave it to front-line staff and encouraged them to share that information with colleagues. It was incredibly successful – we trained over 700 clinical staff in just 60 days in 2014 and this time we hope to reach three thousand staff across the region."

The success of the scheme was recognised this month (July) when the RUH was shortlisted as a finalist in the National Patient Safety Care Awards.

Each year, 44,000 people die from the condition in the UK – more deaths than from breast cancer, bowel cancer and heart attacks combined.

Earlier this month, the National Institute of Health and Care Excellence (NICE) told GPs and medical staff that suspected sepsis in patients must be treated as an emergency in the same way as heart attacks, and prompted all staff to 'Think Sepsis' when assessing anyone who is unwell.

The RUH campaign promotes the use of the UK Sepsis Trust teaching tools and aims to increase public awareness by promoting six signs that, if present, increase the chance that sepsis is present. These are: slurred speech, extreme shivering or muscle pain, passing no urine in a day, severe breathlessness, mottled or discoloured skin and feeling "like I might die."

Dr Jordan said: "Our RUH campaign was designed to raise awareness across the Trust and, like all the best ideas, it's really simple. We have already seen a large improvement in recognition and early



instigation of treatment, with a 62 per cent improvement in appropriate patients receiving timely antibiotics as a result.

“As early diagnosis is so important in successfully treating sepsis, raising public awareness of the condition is also of paramount importance.”

The RUH will be marking World Sepsis Day on September 13 with displays across the hospital site providing information about this potential killer.

We would also like to hold displays across the community on September 13 to increase public awareness, so if anyone is interested in helping us please get in touch via victoria.selby@nhs.net

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