



May 5th 2023

Deputy Paul McAuliffe
Dáil Éireann
Kildare Street
Dublin 2

PQ 17946/23

To ask the Minister for Health his plans to raise awareness of sepsis with an emphasis on the patient experience; and if he will make a statement on the matter.

Dear Deputy McAuliffe,

I refer to the above Parliamentary Question which has been referred by the Minister for Health to the Health Service Executive for direct response.

Sepsis is life-threatening organ dysfunction due to a dysregulated response to infection and remains a major cause of health loss worldwide. There were 48.9 million cases of sepsis worldwide in 2017 resulting in 11 million deaths. Sepsis is a global priority as identified by the World Health Organization (WHO).

Ireland has sought to progress sepsis as a clinical care and patient safety priority since 2013. In 2014 the HSE established the National Sepsis Clinical Programme, with an assigned team to lead out on the objectives of the programme. The focus of the Programme is sepsis awareness to promote early recognition and evidence-based management. The initial work focused on awareness and standardised management of sepsis in the acute setting, with the implementation of national clinical guidelines, development of education modules and education videos and regular education sessions to staff.

Work has also been done on raising awareness to the public over the past number of years. Examples of this work include:

- Planned communications using media relations to publicise sepsis risk, symptoms and what action people should take to respond to signs of this time sensitive medical emergency.
- HSE clinicians and patients have taken part in media interviews on radio and TV.
- Development of good quality information on HSE.ie website about sepsis, which is the primary route that the public take to learn about health topics.
- Utilisation of social media to share promotional videos and messaging
- Production of a range of printed information materials for the public, which were made available through hospitals and health facilities including World Sepsis Day in September
- Display of the signs and symptoms of sepsis on HSE National Ambulance Service fleet.
- Attendance at Public events on several occasions, and using these events to share awareness materials and engage in education.



- Appointment of a GP lead in early 2023, leading a one year project on education on sepsis recognition and management in GP practises.
- The programme has recently secured funding for a project manager to develop and lead a maternal sepsis awareness campaign. Insights gained from the maternal sepsis awareness programme to inform potential future awareness programmes in other sepsis subgroups.
- A public paediatric sepsis information leaflet was designed in collaboration with Joe Hughes, founder of Lil Reds campaign.

The programme will also be distributing sepsis awareness leaflets to GP practises and community pharmacies in the near future for hand out to the general public.

In 2023, the National Clinical Programme for Sepsis is engaging with the Department of Health on a Patient and Staff Stories project regarding Antimicrobial resistance, Infection Prevention and Control and Sepsis. It is hoped that capturing patient views and experiences will help drive improvements in sepsis practises across the health and social care settings. The programme is also holding a sepsis conference in Dublin Castle in September, with a variety of speakers on the topic of sepsis. One of these speakers is herself a sepsis survivor.

The National Clinical Programme for sepsis has always been aware of the importance of hearing the patient voice, with two patient advocates as members of the sepsis steering group for many years. With plans for development and implementation of a strategic 5 year action plan on sepsis management in Ireland, it is hoped that patient advocates will again be happy to contribute to the work of the programme, to meet the agreed objectives.

Yours sincerely,

Dr. Michael O'Dwyer, Clinical Lead, National Clinical Programme for Sepsis

Date: 4th May 2023