

We must lead on treatment of sepsis and antimicrobial resistance, writes Professor Ian Cumming

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Sepsis and antibiotic resistance are two key issues that we as a healthcare system are determined to tackle.

123,000 cases of sepsis occur in England each year with approximately 37,000 deaths annually - more than breast, bowel and prostate cancers combined.

Early identification and management is key to reducing deaths from sepsis - but the cornerstone of sepsis treatment is using appropriate antibiotics to manage the infection. Put simply, without adequate antibiotics, we will not be able to treat sepsis effectively.

This is why it's so important to slow down the development of antimicrobial resistance. As an Antibiotic Guardian, I try to lead by example on the importance of using antibiotics in the right way, at the right dose, and at the right time.

I believe that effective management of sepsis and antimicrobial resistance is everyone's responsibility. Trust boards and senior management can help ensure that quality standards are met and frontline staff are supported. We at Health Education England play a key role in helping senior leaders to do this.

We have produced a learning resource and training programme [6] on sepsis and antimicrobial resistance designed specifically for boards and senior leaders. It introduces the NHS clinical priorities on these areas and explains how non-clinical leaders can help to improve how we approach sepsis and antimicrobial resistance for those in our care.

It can be used to help engagement and debate within your trust, encouraging you to think about what you can do to as senior leaders to encourage the quick recognition, management and treatment of sepsis, and promote high standards in antibiotic prescribing.

Senior leaders, at board, senior management and clinical level play a vital role in setting and nurturing a positive organisational culture. Our leadership can encourage other healthcare workers to develop their own skills and knowledge in this area.

Together, we can ensure that good sepsis and antimicrobial stewardship practices are embedded across our health and care systems. I would encourage you to access these materials on our e-Learning for Healthcare website [6] and ask your colleagues to use them too.

Access the e-learning [6]

Find out more about our work [7].

Posted by Professor Ian Cumming OBE, Chief Executive

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Links

[1] <https://www.hee.nhs.uk/our-work>

[2] <https://www.e-lfh.org.uk/>

[3] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/>

[4] <https://www.hee.nhs.uk/news-blogs-events>

[5] <https://www.hee.nhs.uk/about>

[6] <https://www.e-lfh.org.uk/programmes/sepsis/>

[7] <https://www.hee.nhs.uk/our-work/sepsis-awareness>