

Sepsis survivors remain in danger of re-hospitalization

September 2 2024, by Ernie Mundell



If you're lucky enough to survive a battle with the bloodstream infection sepsis, risks of a recurrence that sends you back to hospital within a month remain high, new data shows.

In a study involving over 7,100 patients with sepsis, nearly a quarter (23.6%) were readmitted to the hospital within 30 days of being discharged to their homes.

Hospital readmission often occurred among patients "considered well enough to be discharged home or to [home health care](#)," noted study co-author Priscilla Hartley, an assistant professor in nursing at Augusta University in Athens, Ga.

However, many of these patients acquired "another episode of sepsis or another infection" and had to be readmitted for care, she said in a news release from the American Association of Critical-Care Nurses (AACN).

"We must find ways to close the gap between hospitals and all discharge settings if we wish to continue to improve the odds of surviving sepsis," Hartley said in a AACN news release.

Her team [published](#) its findings Sept. 1 in the *American Journal of Critical Care*.

According to the [National Institutes of Health](#) (NIH), sepsis is form of blood infection that often arises in people already weakened by another illness, such as pneumonia or a [urinary tract infection](#).

Sepsis can develop quickly and soon be out of control: 1 in 5 people with sepsis will die, according to the NIH.

"By some estimates, [severe sepsis](#) or [septic shock](#) strikes nearly 1 million Americans each year. At least 200,000 of them die in the hospital shortly afterward," the NIH said.

The new study tracked 30-day outcomes for 7,107 U.S. adults who were

treated for sepsis at a Boston hospital between 2008 and 2019. All were discharged to their homes, sometimes with home health care present.

According to Hartley's team, 23.6% of the patients (1,674) ended up back in the hospital within a month.

More than two thirds (68.3%) had experienced another episode of [sepsis](#), and more than 30% of those who were readmitted had to do so up to three times, usually caused by recurrent infection.

In many cases, patients were discharged from hospital to "inappropriate settings," Hartley and her colleagues said, upping the risk for a re-[infection](#).

More must be done to spot those patients at highest risk, the researchers said.

"Identifying the patients at highest risk of readmission can facilitate discharge to the appropriate setting to continue their recovery and guide interventions and follow-up," the AACN news release noted.

More information: Priscilla Hartley et al, Readmissions in Sepsis Survivors: Discharge Setting Risks, *American Journal of Critical Care* (2024). [DOI: 10.4037/ajcc2024947](https://doi.org/10.4037/ajcc2024947)

Find out more about sepsis at the [Cleveland Clinic](#).

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