

# Post-Sepsis Syndrome: Development of an Educational Pamphlet to Improve Care for Sepsis Survivors

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UBC Action on Sepsis Research Cluster  
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# Agenda

- 12:00 – 12:10: Overview of post-sepsis syndrome from Susan Korstad, sepsis survivor and retired registered nurse
- 12:10 – 12:20: Introduce new pamphlet of post-sepsis syndrome: purpose, key information, implementation.
- 12:20 – 12:30: Q & A



# Learning Outcomes

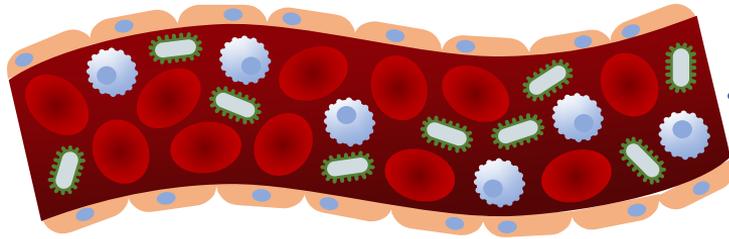
1. Define what post-sepsis syndrome is.
2. Describe some of the physical, cognitive and psychological effects that sepsis survivors can experience after discharge.
3. Describe where a patient in BC can access information on recovery from sepsis following discharge



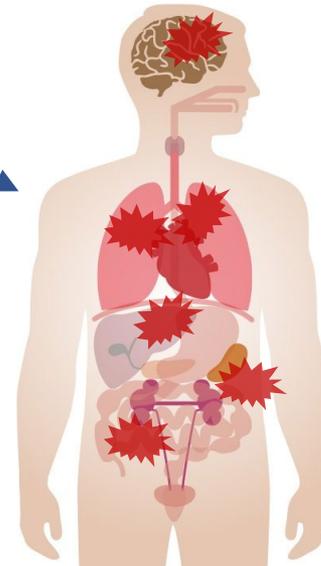
# What is Sepsis and Post-Sepsis Syndrome?

Sepsis is a life-threatening organ dysfunction caused by **dysregulated immune response** to infection.

In **Canada**, there were an **estimated 75,000 cases of sepsis in 2017**; of those an estimated 18,000 died. Globally, sepsis caused 11 million deaths in 2017. The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic remains to be determined.



**Any infection (bacterial, viral, fungal)  
can cause sepsis.**





**Increased risk of rehospitalization within the first year**



**Post-Sepsis Syndrome**



**Sepsis Survivors**



**Immunosuppression**

Recurrent infections

**Neurological Damage**

Memory deficits,  
PTSD

**Cardiovascular Disease**

Increased risk of heart  
attack, stroke

**Poor quality of life**

Fatigue, muscle  
weakness,  
unemployment

**Post-Acute COVID-19 Syndrome (PACS)**

Secondary infections

Recurrent sepsis

Loss of smell/taste

“Brain Fog”

Blood clots, Strokes

Myocardial scarring

Fatigue

Muscle aches

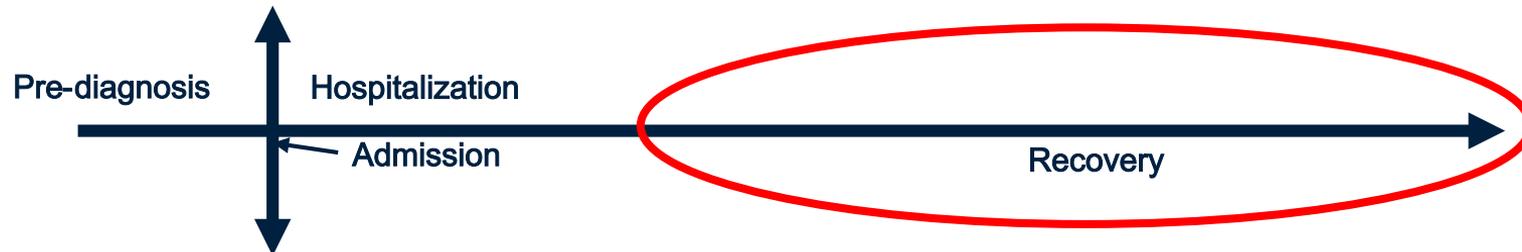


# Susan Korstad

**Septic Shock Survivor** following laparoscopic surgery (2018) and background in nursing.

## My post-sepsis syndrome:

- Severe muscle wasting and weakness; fatigue
- Polyneuropathy
- Shortness of breath, ongoing respiratory issues
- Hair loss
- Insomnia
- Poor memory, brain fog and short-term memory loss
- Psychological Disorders
- Family impact



# Post-Sepsis Syndrome Pamphlet: a new resource for patients, caregivers, and families

## Problem:

- Sepsis survivors often face long-term effects that persist following recovery from the initial condition.
- Many knowledge gaps exist between experience, evidence and clinical practice.

## Purpose of the pamphlet:

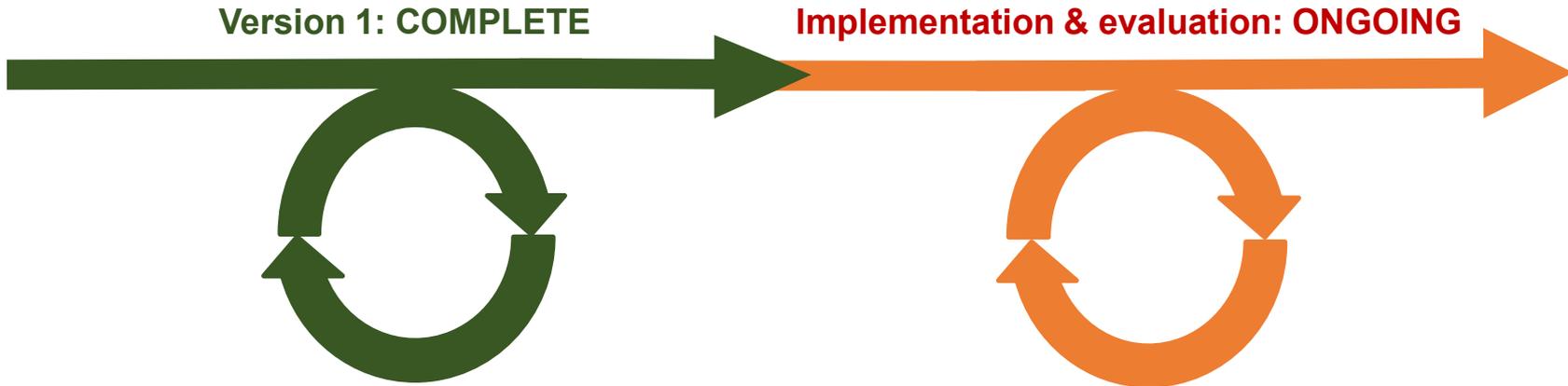
- 1) Increase health care provider, patient, and caregiver recognition of post-sepsis syndrome.
- 2) Enhance access to relevant existing resources and programs that can support high-quality follow-up care.



# Developing the pamphlet

- 1) Ideation: Collaboration with Action on Sepsis Patient Advisory Council and BC Patient Safety & Quality Council.
- 2) Stakeholder engagement & iterative reviews: With patients and health professionals.
- 3) Implementation & evaluation: In progress.

**Version one of the resource available at: <https://bcpsqc.ca/resources/sepsis/>**



# Content overview

## Two formats:

- Trifold pamphlet.
- Double-sided 1 page leaflet: includes blank space for adding local resources for recovery.

**After you are discharged from hospital, you may experience:**

**Physical**

- Trouble sleeping
- Problems with balance
- Difficulty walking
- Headaches
- Feeling unwell after sleeping
- Problems eating
- Muscle weakness to move parts of your body
- Shortness of breath
- Dizziness
- Visual or spatial

**Were you recently in the hospital with a severe infection that led to organ failure?**

This is called **SEPSIS**. Sepsis occurs when the immune system overreacts to infection. It affects the whole body.

**You are a sepsis survivor**

Recovery from sepsis can continue after you leave the hospital. **Post-Sepsis Syndrome** is the name for the physical, mental, and emotional challenges that can occur during recovery. It may also be called Post-Critical Illness or Post-ICU syndrome.

**Emotional**

Problems with thinking, memory, or concentration

Recurrent nightmares or flashbacks

Isolation

Changes in mood, behavior, and quality of life

# RECOVERY AFTER SEPSIS

Access on sepsis survivors' Foundation (Severe Infection)

- In Metro Vancouver care and community resources:
- Vancouver Area Foundation BC (vancouverareafoundation.ca)
- John Ruedy Centre for HIV/AIDS: johnrueydc.ca
- PHS Community Health Services (for DTES residents): phsa.ca/health-services
- Post-COVID-19 Recovery: [phsa.ca/health-services/post-covid-19-recovery](https://phsa.ca/health-services/post-covid-19-recovery)

- For more information on care for patients and caregivers:
- BC Sepsis Network: [bcpsqc.ca/](https://bcpsqc.ca/)
- UK Sepsis Trust: [www.sepsistrust.org/](https://www.sepsistrust.org/)

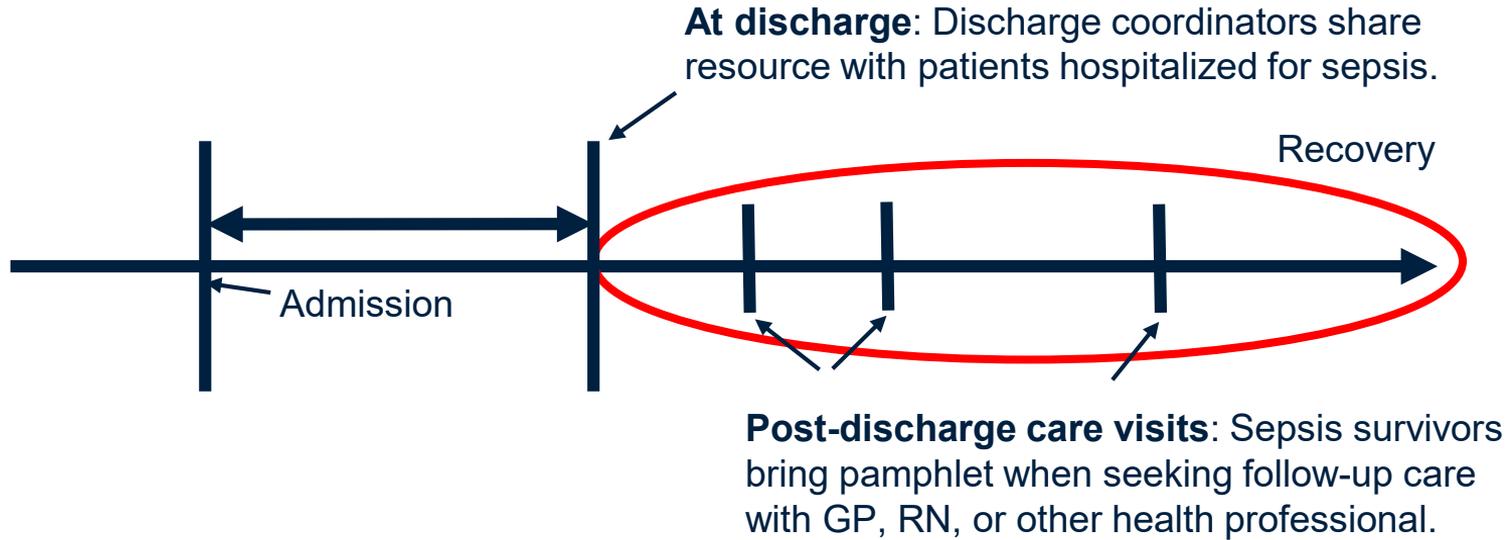
Learn about global sepsis: [www.globalsepsis.org/](https://www.globalsepsis.org/)



Information for patients, families, and caregivers.



# Using the pamphlet in practice



**Interested in disseminating the pamphlet? Please reach out to us so we can help create a plan for evaluating impact.**

**Email: [stefanie.novakowski@bcchr.ca](mailto:stefanie.novakowski@bcchr.ca).**



# Learning Outcomes

1. Define what post-sepsis syndrome is:
  - Physical, mental, and emotional challenges that can occur post-sepsis.
2. Describe some of the physical, cognitive and psychological effects that sepsis survivors can experience after discharge.
  - Hair loss, insomnia, poor memory, brain fog and short-term memory loss, PTSD
3. Describe where a patient in BC can access information on recovery from sepsis following discharge.
  - Pamphlet and 1-page flyer available at:  
<https://bcpsqc.ca/resources/sepsis/>



**Thank you for listening!**  
**Questions?**



**[bcpsqc.ca/resources/sepsis/](https://bcpsqc.ca/resources/sepsis/)**

