Sepsis awareness month: a reminder of the need for swift action

September is sepsis awareness month and it reminds us of the importance of swift detection of the potentially life-threatening infection. In my role as nurse consultant, I have taken the lead in sepsis performance at a few organisations. This has included audits, which identify how serious the condition is, and how important early identification and treatment are to prevent life-changing complications and fatal disease progression.

There is a variety of system-based barriers that compromise the delivery of timely treatment, but healthcare staff can also make assumptions that delay action — such as the belief that specific presentations are not linked to infections, such as atrial fibrillation, diabetic ketoacidosis, and diarrhoea and vomiting.

Regular training on the need for sepsis screening is vital, supported by a system in which nurses can easily administer antibiotics and fluids when indicated.

The Evidence & practice article by Daniella Leloch (page 20) discusses the assessment and management of neutropenic sepsis. It provides sound advice and several citations that are relevant to the practice of emergency nurses, particularly when caring for people with cancer who are receiving systemic anticancer therapy.

Encouraging and empowering local leads to develop and deliver innovative solutions to their challenges makes a difference.

In the Evidence & practice article on page 27, Craig Brown and colleagues discuss a project in Wales that demonstrates the importance of collaboration and service evaluation in high-quality clinical care. There is much to be learned from this article, particularly that complex — and often bureaucratic and costly — evaluation methods provided by private providers are not necessarily the best option.

We are always looking for articles from budding authors so please contact us if you have an area of practice or a project you would like to write about.

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