

# The Kampala Declaration: Commitment to improve care for sepsis and severely ill patients in Africa



African Sepsis Alliance, African Federation of Critical Care Nurses, Global Sepsis Alliance, World Federation of Critical Care Nurses

**Key Words:** Africa ❖ African Sepsis Alliance ❖ critical care ❖ federation ❖ intensive care unit ❖ position statement ❖ sepsis ❖

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- The African Sepsis Alliance, the African Federation of Critical Care Nurses, the Global Sepsis Alliance and the World Federation of Critical Care Nurses call for urgent and effective national and international action to develop and implement sepsis improvement programmes throughout Africa. The World Health Organization Global Resolution on sepsis constitutes a solid basis for the further development and improvement of sepsis in Africa.
- In keeping with the objectives of the African Union and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, they urge governments, the World Health Organization, other international organizations, as well as multilateral and bilateral agencies, non-governmental organizations, funding agencies, all health workers and the whole world community to support national and international commitment to improvement of sepsis prevention and management and to channel increased technical and financial support to it.
- The first signatories of this declaration call on all the aforementioned to collaborate in introducing, developing and maintaining sepsis improvement in accordance with the spirit and content of this Declaration.

## INTRODUCTION

During the African Sepsis Alliance Symposium and the African Federation of Critical Care Nurses Conference, meeting in Kampala, Uganda on the 20th day of October in the year Two Thousand and Seventeen, the African Sepsis Alliance, the African Federation of Critical Care Nurses, the Global Sepsis Alliance and the World Federation of Critical Care Nurses expressed the need for urgent action by all governments, all health and development workers, and the African community to protect and promote the health of its people, and hereby made the following

## DECLARATION

- I. The organizers, supporters and participants of this first African Sepsis Symposium strongly reaffirm that sepsis is the most important cause of severe illness in Africa. It is the most common pathway to death for patients with infection. It is the most important preventable cause of death in Africa, resulting in over two million estimated deaths per year in Africa. It kills young people in Africa and leads to a disproportionate number of years of life lost.
- II. Acknowledging that there are variations, health care services in Africa are currently ill equipped to identify and look after severely ill patients such as those with sepsis. The existing inadequate data and improvement efforts from African countries (which are associated with the highest global burden of sepsis and mortality) is no longer acceptable and should therefore be of common concern to all African countries. The time has come for change.
- III. Improving prevention, recognition and management of sepsis following the recent United Nations World Health Assembly global resolution on sepsis, is essential to achieve universal health coverage and the achievement of the United Nations sustainable development goals. Improving sepsis prevention and management and reducing mortality and morbidity due to sepsis is essential for sustained economic and social development and improving the quality of life. It is also key to strengthening health care systems and reducing cost by providing cost efficient care. All African people have the right and duty to access basic and efficient health care services.
- IV. Governments have a responsibility for the health of their people which can be fulfilled by focusing on the provision of adequate health and social measures to reduce the impact of infections and sepsis. A key target of governments, international organizations and the African community in the coming decade should be to strengthen the health system to prevent, recognise and treat severely ill patients such as those with sepsis. This will permit Africans to lead socially and economically productive lives.
- V. Improving management of sepsis is essential. Health care should be based on practical, evidence-based and socially acceptable methods and technology. It forms an integral part both of a nation's health priorities and the overall social and economic development of the community. Access to effective critical care services is an essential element of healthcare. Critical care services should be developed, adequately staffed and resourced.
- VI. All governments should formulate national policies, strategies and plans of action to launch and sustain sepsis improvement as part of a comprehensive national health system and in coordination with all other sectors. To this end, it will be necessary to exercise political will to mobilize each nation's resources and to use available external resources rationally. The political and public space is the space in which sepsis needs to be in order for things to change.

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- VII. All African countries should cooperate in a spirit of partnership and service to ensure improvement in the management of severely ill patients (sepsis included) for all patients since the attainment of health by people in any one nation directly concerns and benefits every other nation.
- VIII. Improving prevention and management of sepsis:
- is an integral aspect of improving management of severely ill patients and role of our healthcare systems;
  - addresses the most important causes of severe illness in the African community and provides a platform to strengthen health systems;
  - involves providing basic health care services such as recording vital signs and other necessary measures for all patients in order to identify and respond to severely ill patients. All healthcare workers and facilities should focus on recording vital signs and responding to severely ill patients. Healthcare workers and facilities should be provided with the means to do this. All patients have a right to be assessed effectively, which involves a full set of vital signs;
  - includes at least: prevention of infections by improving sanitation, nutrition and access to vaccination, reducing maternal and paediatric deaths, improving infection prevention and control,
  - reducing the impact of healthcare associated infections, detection and response to emerging infections, reducing antimicrobial resistance, improving access to essential drugs such as antibiotics, improving education and training of healthcare workers and members of the public, increased research and development, improving coding, surveillance and funding for these endeavours;
  - involves, in addition to the health sector, all related sectors and the public and politicians and demands the coordinated efforts of all those sectors;
- requires and promotes maximum community and individual self-reliance and participation in the prevention and early recognition of sepsis and to this end develops through appropriate education to ensure the ability of communities to participate;
  - should be sustained by integrated, functional and mutually supportive referral systems (from primary to secondary care and between departments in hospital), leading to the progressive improvement of comprehensive health care for all, and giving priority to those most in need;
  - relies on early recognition and treatment of patients in order to reduce progression of disease and poor outcomes. This also relies on identification of severely ill patients and their early treatment in order to avoid the need for admission to critical care units (which are currently inadequately equipped and associated with high mortality). Critical care outreach services are urgently required in all African countries; and
  - health promotion through education, incentives, referral and follow-up by appropriate community services after discharge is also important to reduce post-discharge mortality and suffering caused by severe illness such as sepsis.
- IX. The African Sepsis Alliance and key stakeholders resolve to work together to develop effective guidelines for recognition and management of severely ill patients with sepsis in Africa. This should be priority for action within the next 12 months.
- X. Quality improvement, innovation and research to produce data and improvements in care for severely ill patients with sepsis in Africa is urgently required. Collaboration across African countries can help achieve this and should be encouraged. Funding from international organisations and sponsors should make this a priority.

