

HEALTH AND HUMAN SCIENCES

Sepsis Knowledge Among Adults Living in Tippecanoe County

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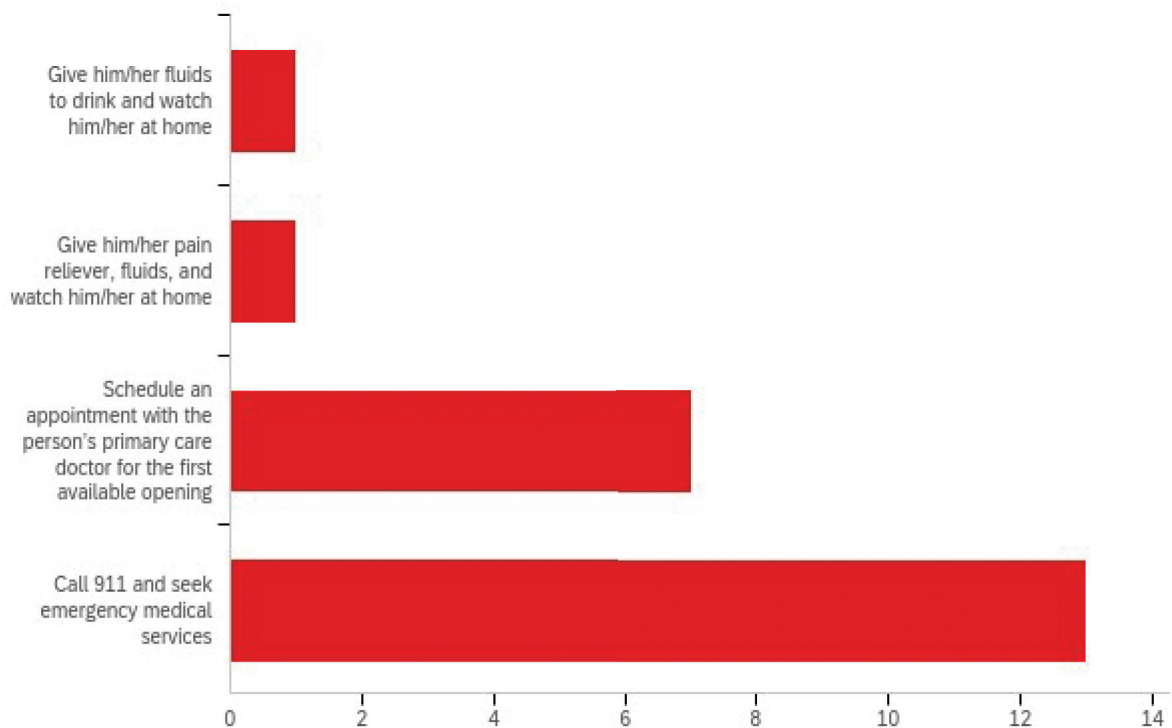
Sepsis is a dangerous immune response that can happen when the body is overwhelmed by infection. Sepsis can progress to organs shutting down and death from septicemia. Many adults will generally delay accessing medical attention, which is especially concerning in cases of sepsis when the risk of long-term damage or even death is high.

This study was created to survey knowledge of sepsis among adults living in Tippecanoe County. An online survey was distributed to Purdue students and other adult residents of Tippecanoe County through a shareable link. 22 responses were received. The survey had items pertaining to the study objectives, which included knowledge of risk factors, prevalence, symptoms, exposure to conversations about sepsis with health care providers, and what is to be done if sepsis is suspected by someone who is not a health care provider.

The results of this survey revealed that while half of respondents accurately identified risk factors, only 32% of respondents could accurately identify symptoms and causes. 68% of respondents reported they had never had a conversation about sepsis with a health care provider. Even young adults, such as Purdue students, should learn about sepsis as they might be caring for others who have more risk factors. Sepsis awareness is especially important as the United States experiences an increase of older adults who have more risk factors. The results of this study demonstrate the importance of increased conversations about sepsis, which could decrease mortality from septicemia.

Research advisor Gerald C. Hyner writes: "Jessica's project helps public health professionals understand what people need to know about septicemia. If more people can recognize preexisting conditions that increase the risk of sepsis, and how even a minor injury can become serious, this dangerous complication may often be avoided."

Responses to the survey item "If you suspect that someone who is not currently in a hospital has developed sepsis, what should be done?"



This graph shows the results from one of the survey items. If it is suspected that someone has developed sepsis, 911 should be called. Only 13 of the 22 respondents (59%) accurately identified the course of action that would be needed to potentially save a life from septicemia.