

Inpatient Care for Septicemia or Sepsis: A Challenge for Patients and Hospitals

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Key findings

Data from the National Hospital Discharge Survey, 2008

- The number and rate per 10,000 population of hospitalizations for septicemia or sepsis more than doubled from 2000 through 2008.
- The hospitalization rates for septicemia or sepsis in 2008 were similar for males and females and increased with age.
- Patients under age 65 and aged 65 and over who were hospitalized for septicemia or sepsis in 2008 were sicker and stayed longer than those hospitalized for other conditions.
- In 2008, the proportion of hospitalized patients who were discharged to other short-stay hospitals or long-term care institutions was higher for those with septicemia or sepsis (36%) than for those with other conditions (14%). Seventeen percent of septicemia or sepsis hospitalizations ended in death, whereas only 2% of other hospitalizations did.

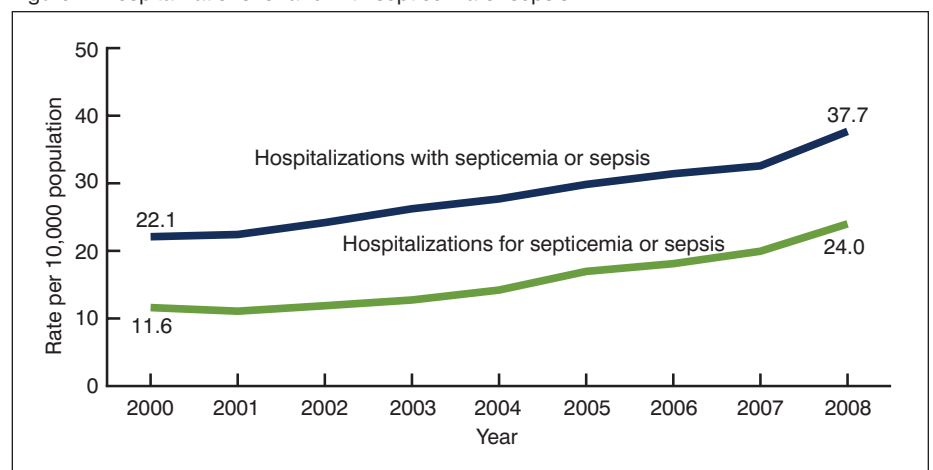
Septicemia and sepsis are serious bloodstream infections that can rapidly become life-threatening. They arise from various infections, including those of the skin, lungs, abdomen, and urinary tract (1,2). Patients with these conditions are often treated in a hospital's intensive care unit (3). Early aggressive treatment increases the chance of survival (4). In 2008, an estimated \$14.6 billion was spent on hospitalizations for septicemia, and from 1997 through 2008, the inflation-adjusted aggregate costs for treating patients hospitalized for this condition increased on average annually by 11.9% (5).

Despite high treatment expenditures, septicemia and sepsis are often fatal (6). Those who survive severe sepsis are more likely to have permanent organ damage (7), cognitive impairment, and physical disability (8). Septicemia is a leading cause of death (9). The purpose of this report is to describe the most recent trends in care for hospital inpatients with these diagnoses.

Keywords: National Hospital Discharge Survey • hospitalization • health care utilization

Hospitalization rates for septicemia or sepsis more than doubled from 2000 through 2008.

Figure 1. Hospitalizations for and with septicemia or sepsis



NOTE: Significant linear trend from 2000 through 2008 for both categories.
SOURCE: CDC/NCHS, National Hospital Discharge Survey, 2000–2008.

