

High volume of severe sepsis patients may result in better outcomes

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A recent study led by Boston University School of Medicine (BUSM) shows that "practice may make perfect" when it comes to caring for patients with severe sepsis. The study showed that patients admitted to academic medical centers that care for more patients with severe sepsis have significantly lower mortality rates than patients cared for at academic medical centers with lower volumes of sepsis patients. Additionally, the superior outcomes at high volume centers were achieved at similar costs compared to the lower volume medical centers.

Published online in the *American Journal of Respiratory and Critical Care Medicine*, the study was led by Allan J. Walkey, MD, MSc, assistant professor of medicine, BUSM, and attending physician, pulmonary, critical care and allergy medicine, Boston Medical Center.

Analyzing data from academic hospitals across the country, provided by the University HealthSystem Consortium, the researchers identified 56,997 [patients](#) with severe [sepsis](#) who were admitted to 124 academic hospitals in 2011. The median length of stay for patients was 12.5 days and the median direct cost for each patient was \$26,304.

Their data indicate that hospitals caring for more sepsis patients had a seven percent lower mortality rate than hospitals with lower volumes. The high volume medical centers had a 22 percent mortality rate while the lower volume hospitals had a 29 percent mortality rate.

"Given the lack of new drugs to treat severe sepsis, medical professionals must look at other ways to increase patient safety and positive outcomes, including the process of how we deliver care," said Walkey. "Our study results demonstrate that hospitals with more experience caring for patients with [severe sepsis](#) were able to achieve better outcomes than hospitals with less experience with sepsis, possibly due to better

processes of care for patients with sepsis."

Provided by Boston University Medical Center

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