

Oxford
consultant
helps identify
patients
at risk.



Case Study

Alerts Created to Flag Sepsis Symptoms

The Challenge

A health system's clinical staff needed decision support tools to help identify patients at risk for sepsis, as it's one of the top five most costly diseases treated within hospitals in the United States. Several studies have shown that mortality rates due to sepsis can be reduced significantly by adhering to aggressive initial care and sepsis bundles. Despite having a robust electronic medical record system, the hospital did not have clinical settings to easily recognize when patients are in the initial phases of sepsis.

The Solution

An Oxford consultant with Epic™ software expertise was assigned to help design tools for early sepsis recognition and management. Throughout the year-plus project, our consultant was fully integrated with the development team and used his unique skillset to present options to the group. Using Best Practice Alert functionality in Epic, a series of complex alerts was developed for nurses and physicians.

- The first alert warned clinicians that the patient was at a possible risk for sepsis after certain abnormal vital signs were documented.
- The second alert warned clinicians about a high lactate result, which is not only one of the principle diagnostic laboratory studies in sepsis, but also an indicator for the extent of treatment.
- The last alert applied Smart Data Elements that were flagged on a patient's chart to prompt the physician to reevaluate the patient 72 hours after the initial Sepsis Bundle was started.

"[Our consultant's] commitment to patient safety, to doing the right thing and to ensuring the delivery of the best build to our clinicians has been exemplary."

The Result

Sepsis alert features were successfully developed to identify patients at risk. Management of patients on the Sepsis Care Path were easily handled by clinical staff through the Smart Data Element flags. In addition, discrete reporting events helped to evaluate the efficacy of this process and the clinical decision support tools that were utilized.

The technology the Oxford consultant helped to develop is now in use in every hospital within our client's health system.

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