Surviving Sepsis Campaign

Recommendations: Hemodynamic Support and Adjunctive Therapy*

G. Fluid Therapy of Severe Sepsis

1. Crystalloids as the initial fluid of choice in the resuscitation of severe sepsis and septic shock (grade 1B).

2. Against the use of hydroxyethyl starches for fluid resuscitation of severe sepsis and septic shock (grade 1B).

3. Albumin in the fluid resuscitation of severe sepsis and septic shock when patients require substantial amounts of crystalloids (grade 2C).

4. Initial fluid challenge in patients with sepsis-induced tissue hypoperfusion with suspicion of hypovolemia to achieve a minimum of 30 mL/kg of crystalloids (a portion of this may be albumin equivalent). More rapid administration and greater amounts of fluid
may be needed in some patients (grade 1C).

5. Fluid challenge technique be applied wherein fluid administration is continued as long as there is hemodynamic improvement either based on dynamic (eg, change in pulse pressure, stroke volume variation) or static (eg, arterial pressure, heart rate) variables (UG).

H. Vasopressors

1. Vasopressor therapy initially to target a mean arterial pressure (MAP) of 65 mm Hg (grade 1C).

2. Norepinephrine as the first choice vasopressor (grade 1B).

3. Epinephrine (added to and potentially substituted for norepinephrine) when an additional agent is needed to maintain adequate blood pressure (grade 2B).

4. Vasopressin 0.03 units/minute can be added to norepinephrine (NE) with intent of either raising MAP or decreasing NE dosage (UG).

5. Low dose vasopressin is not recommended as the single initial vasopressor for treatment of sepsis-induced hypotension and vasopressin doses higher than 0.03-0.04 units/minute should be reserved for salvage therapy (failure to achieve adequate MAP with other vasopressor agents) (UG).

6. Dopamine as an alternative vasopressor agent to norepinephrine only in highly selected patients (eg, patients with low risk of tachyarrhythmias and absolute or relative bradycardia) (grade 2C).

7. Phenylephrine is not recommended in the treatment of septic shock except in circumstances where (a) norepinephrine is associated with serious arrhythmias,
(b) cardiac output is known to be high and blood pressure persistently low or (c) as salvage therapy when combined inotrope/vasopressor drugs and low dose vasopressin have failed to achieve MAP target (grade 1C).

8. Low-dose dopamine should not be used for renal protection (grade 1A).

9. All patients requiring vasopressors have an arterial catheter placed as soon as practical if resources are available (UG).

I. Inotropic Therapy

1. A trial of dobutamine infusion up to 20 micrograms/kg/min be administered or added to vasopressor (if in use) in the presence of (a) myocardial dysfunction as suggested by elevated cardiac filling pressures and low cardiac output, or (b) ongoing signs of hypoperfusion, despite achieving adequate intravascular volume and adequate MAP (grade 1C).

2. Not using a strategy to increase cardiac index to predetermined supranormal levels (grade 1B).

J. Corticosteroids

1. Not using intravenous hydrocortisone to treat adult septic shock patients if adequate fluid resuscitation and vasopressor therapy are able to restore hemodynamic stability (see goals for Initial Resuscitation). In case this is not achievable, we suggest intravenous hydrocortisone alone at a dose of 200 mg per day (grade 2C).

2. Not using the ACTH stimulation test to identify adults with septic shock who should receive hydrocortisone (grade 2B).

3. In treated patients hydrocortisone tapered when vasopressors are no longer required (grade 2D).

4. Corticosteroids not be administered for the treatment of sepsis in the absence of shock (grade 1D).

5. When hydrocortisone is given, use continuous flow (grade 2D).

_____

*Reprinted from Dellinger RP, Levy MM, Rhodes A, et al: Surviving Sepsis Campaign: International guidelines for management of severe sepsis and septic shock: 2012. *Crit Care Med.* 2013; 41:580-637