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8 Deputy G.J. Truscott of St. Brelade of the Minister for Health and Social Services regarding the steps taken to ensure that sepsis or blood poisoning was identified at the General Hospital: (OQ.184/2019)

What steps has the Minister and his department taken to ensure that all doctors and clinicians at the General Hospital are fully trained to spot the early signs of sepsis, or blood poisoning?

The Deputy of St. Ouen (The Minister for Health and Social Services):

A lot of work is done to prevent sepsis developing in patients. Since September of last year, we have trained approximately 170 Health and Community Services staff members, including nurses, healthcare assistants, paramedics and doctors, on the early recognition of sepsis and its prompt management. This includes Emergency Department staff, care co-ordinators and overnight teams. A training audit is to be undertaken to identify any key gaps. We also provide a bespoke annual sepsis and infection control update to all of our student nurses training on the Island and sepsis is also included on our immediate life support and paediatric immediate life support training, which is provided annually to all staff. There is a written guideline for staff on the early diagnosis of sepsis, which runs to 18 pages and which has been shared with all clinicians and escalated down the departments. In addition, there is to be a sepsis awareness day on 13th September, which will include information for staff and public, it will be supported by our practice development and clinical staff and communication team.

5.8.1 Deputy G.J. Truscott:

I want to thank the Minister. What sparked this particular question was a BBC news report and it was regarding the N.H.S. (National Health Service) where people were going into A. and E. (Accident and Emergency) feeling really unwell, but it was misdiagnosed, it was early onset of sepsis, but it was misdiagnosed and they were sent home with a bottle of paracetamol and tragically, in many cases, that resulted in death, or loss of limbs. It is an extremely difficult condition to recognise and I do appreciate ... and I was looking for words of reassurance from the Minister, which he has provided me, and it is so important ...

The Bailiff:

Is there a question coming?

Deputy G.J. Truscott:

There is, it is just coming. Do you feel that there are enough resources in Jersey with regard to training and how many cases have been recorded in the past 12 months with regard to sepsis?

The Deputy of St. Ouen:

I agree with what the Deputy was saying that it is often a difficult disease to diagnose and to recognise and there are differences in presentations between adults and children also. My impression is - but it is my untrained impression - there is excellent training among our staff and a good awareness of sepsis and how it needs to be managed once identified. The question did not relate to figures and I am afraid I do not have any figures as to whether any incidences of the disease have been found among patients and, if so, how many. But I can provide that information as soon as I can get it to the Deputy.

5.8.2 Deputy S.M. Ahier:

Central line associated bloodstream infections are a huge concern for patients with up to 25 per cent of patient deaths from what is a preventable problem. A.I. (artificial intelligence) can predict which patients are likely to develop central line infections and thereby assist doctors and clinicians to form early diagnoses. What progress is being made in this field?

The Deputy of St. Ouen:

We recognise that A.I. has a great deal to offer in the field of health, as in so many other fields, but it is early days in that respect, but we want, within our Government Plan, to invest more money within the technology, which would include A.I. and this is certainly going to be a matter for development and close interest in the years to come.

5.8.3 Deputy G.J. Truscott:

As I say, I thank the words of the Minister and I am sure the public are reassured that we are doing a good job with regard to this condition. Could more be done to inform the general public with regard to the signs and symptoms of sepsis, whether a public leaflet, or something, could be produced and issued locally, does the Minister feel that there is merit in that?

The Deputy of St. Ouen:

Yes, I recall some publicity recently about a young mother who noticed an unusual mark on her child's skin and she had learned just some months before something about sepsis and how it presented itself and wondered if it might be. As a precaution, she took her child to A. and E. and she did the right thing, because it did turn out to be the early signs and fortunately her young son was treated and I understand made a full recovery. But it is fortunate that she was aware and I agree with the Deputy that whatever we can do to make parents and the general public aware of these risks can be helpful and it is something I will mention. I have spoken about the Sepsis Awareness Day in September and I will make enquiries as to what other programmes are out there to inform the general public.