

Best Sepsis Care for Our Kids

National Forum for Paediatric Sepsis Week

Wednesday, 22 April 2026 | 1:30PM-3:45PM AEST | Online

Program

1:30 PM **Acknowledgement of Country and Welcome**

Dr Brett Abbenbroek

Program Manager, Sepsis Australia

Program Manager, Asia Pacific Sepsis Alliance

1:35 PM **Forum Introduction**

Alana English

Advanced Social Worker, Queensland Paediatric Sepsis Program

Childrens Health Queensland

1:40 PM **Victorian Paediatric Sepsis Recognition Tool Pilot**

Katie Smith

Senior Project Officer, Victorian Paediatric Clinical Network

Safer Care Victoria

1:55 PM **Designing for Difference: Why NSW developed a Neonatal Sepsis Pathway**

Jo Davis

Improvement Lead, Maternity and Neonatal Safety Program, Systems Safety Improvement, Clinical Excellence Commission, New South Wales Health

2:10 PM **"You're listening but you're not hearing": qualitative exploration of parents' lived experience of paediatric sepsis**

Meagan O'Keefe

Advanced Social Worker, Queensland Paediatric Sepsis Program,

Childrens Health Queensland



2:25 PM

Bubba's Story

Charky

Mum of Bubba (sepsis survivor)

2:40 PM

Staph Sepsis: looking beyond antibiotics

Dr Anita Campbell

Paediatric Infectious Diseases Specialist, Department of Infectious Diseases
Perth Children's Hospital, Child and Adolescent Health Service
Western Australia Health

2:55 PM

The Right Call at the Right Time: Strengthening Sepsis Escalation Pathways

Dr Ajay Chipiri

Clinical Director Emergency Department, Rockhampton Hospital
Central Queensland Hospital and Health Service

3:10 PM

Learning Together About Life After Paediatric Sepsis: Building an evidence-informed, co-designed model of care

Professor Debbie Long

School of Nursing, Faculty of Health, Queensland University of Technology,
Centre for Healthcare Transformation

3:25 PM

Innovations in early sepsis recognition in children

A/Prof Adam Irwin

Medical Co-Lead, Queensland Paediatric Sepsis Program
Principal Research Fellow, Paediatric Infectious Diseases, University of Queensland

3:40 PM

Final Words

Alana English

Advanced Social Worker, Queensland Paediatric Sepsis Program
Children's Health Queensland



Government of Western Australia
Child and Adolescent Health Service



Meet the *Best Sepsis Care for our Kids* presenters

Host

Dr Brett Abbenbroek

Dr Brett Abbenbroek is the Program Manager of Sepsis Australia and the Asia Pacific Sepsis Alliance (APSA) in the Critical Care Division at The George Institute.

Brett is a Registered Nurse with extensive critical care clinical, education and management experience. His qualifications include intensive care, health management, a Bachelor of Science, Masters in Public Health and doctoral studies into the efficiency and effectiveness of organisational models in critical care and the impact on patient and nurse outcomes. His experience in health policy, planning, project management, digital health and clinical safety advisory roles experience was integral to the development and launch of the national Sepsis Clinical Care Standard in June 2022. This national care standard places Australia at the forefront globally towards achieving a systems-based approach for improving outcomes and reducing the burden of sepsis.

Facilitator

Alana English

Alana has extensive experience in Clinical Social Work and is an Advanced Social Worker with the Queensland Paediatric Sepsis Program. This role focuses on high level clinical advice to support clinician engagement as well as leading and managing the statewide Family Support Program for families of a child diagnosed with sepsis or who are bereaved due to sepsis. Alana has worked in a variety of clinical and program positions, including hospital based Social Work, paediatric rehabilitation, child and youth mental health, and organisational psychology. Across her career, she has remained passionate about supporting children, young people and families with their experience of grief and loss, using a strengths-based approach which validates their individual experience and promotes resilience.

Presenters

Katie Smith

Victorian Paediatric Sepsis Recognition Tool Pilot

Katie is a Nurse Unit Manager in the Day Cancer Centre at the Royal Children's Hospital in Melbourne and a Senior Project Officer with the Victorian Paediatric Clinical Network. Katie has extensive experience in paediatric nursing in Australia and overseas with expertise spanning across hospice and palliative care, emergency medicine, oncology, and ambulatory care. Katie has contributed to numerous quality improvement projects focused on enhancing patient experience, access, and flow, and have played a key role in shaping the Royal Children's Hospital's strategy, vision, and nursing roadmap. She believes that working in leadership and management is about ensuring that our multidisciplinary teams function effectively, providing the highest standard of care, and driving improvements in the healthcare system for all.

Jo Davis

Designing for Difference: Why NSW developed a Neonatal Sepsis Pathway

Jo is a proud neonatal nurse and Improvement Lead with the Maternity and Neonatal Safety Program at the NSW Clinical Excellence Commission. Jo has considerable clinical and improvement experience and is a passionate advocate for the neonatal population. She is committed to improving safety and quality of care for mothers, babies, and families, while supporting the clinicians who provide that care.

Meagan O'Keefe

“You're listening but you're not hearing”: qualitative exploration of parents' lived experience of paediatric sepsis

Meagan O'Keefe (BSW) is an Advanced Social Worker with the Queensland Paediatric Sepsis Program, bringing extensive clinical and leadership experience from the Paediatric Intensive Care Unit at Queensland Children's Hospital. Her practice is grounded in trauma-informed care, with expertise in grief and loss in the context of high-acuity and life-threatening illness. She specialises in understanding and responding to the complex psychosocial impacts of paediatric sepsis on children, young people, and their families, with a strong focus on family-centred care. Meagan co-leads the delivery of a co-designed Family Support Program for Queensland families affected by paediatric sepsis. This innovative program - the first of its kind in Australia – aims to improve family experiences and access to support across the sepsis care continuum.

Dr Anita Campbell

Staph Sepsis: looking beyond antibiotics

Dr Anita Campbell is an Infectious Diseases Consultant Physician at Perth Children's Hospital, a Raine Clinician Postdoctoral Research Fellow, and Deputy Director of the Wesfarmers Centre of Vaccines and Infectious Diseases at The Kid, and Clinical Senior Lecturer, School of Medicine, The University of Western Australia.

Dr Campbell is dedicated to conducting research that aims to improve outcomes for children with critical infections and sepsis through a diverse research portfolio spanning from clinical trials to community co-design. Her work explores innovative approaches to tackling antimicrobial resistance and preventing infections, including strengthening immunisation strategies for medically at-risk children.

Dr Ajay Chipiri

The Right Call at the Right Time: Strengthening Sepsis Escalation Pathways

Dr Ajay Chipiri is an experienced Emergency Physician and Clinical Director of the Emergency Department at Rockhampton Hospital in Central Queensland. He brings a strong track record in emergency medicine leadership, with a focus on delivering high-quality, timely, and patient-centred care in regional and rural settings.

As Clinical Director, Ajay provides strategic and operational leadership to a multidisciplinary team, overseeing service delivery in a high-demand emergency environment. He works collaboratively with hospital executives, statewide programs, and frontline clinicians to implement sustainable improvements in emergency care pathways.

Prof Debbie Long

Learning Together About Life After Paediatric Sepsis: Building an evidence-informed, co-designed model of care

Dr Debbie Long is a Professor in the School of Nursing, Faculty of Health, Queensland University of Technology. Debbie has completed a Master of Nursing (Critical Care) and was awarded a Doctor of Philosophy in Nursing from Griffith University. Debbie is recognised as a leader in paediatric intensive care nursing with prior roles as the Nursing Lead for research in the PICU at the Royal Children's Hospital and the Queensland Children's Hospital. She has a special interest in the medical and nursing treatments that contribute to improved outcomes in paediatric critical illness (Liberation) and improving outcomes in PICU survivors. She has also published widely, in the areas of sedation, delirium and post-traumatic stress in the PICU. In recent years, Debbie's work has increasingly focused on raising awareness of post-intensive care syndrome - paediatrics (PICS-p) and patient-centred health care models for children following critical illness. Her vision is to help all children who have survived a critical illness to recover; by supporting health systems to detect vulnerabilities early and enable targeted interventions to optimise outcomes.

A/Prof Adam Irwin

Innovations in early sepsis recognition in children

Dr Adam Irwin is a Principal Research Fellow in Paediatric Infectious Diseases at The University of Queensland and Queensland Children's Hospital in Brisbane, Australia. His research focuses on the early recognition of invasive infections and sepsis, and the optimal use of antimicrobials in children. He is the medical co-chair of the Queensland Paediatric Sepsis Program which was awarded a Global Sepsis Alliance award in 2020, and Queensland Health Excellence awards in 2022 for Healthcare Delivery and Consumer Engagement, and a member of the Australian Group on Antimicrobial Resistance-Kids Steering Committee. He is a recipient of a National Health and Medical Research Council Emerging Leadership Fellowship to investigate the management of multi-drug-resistant gram-negative infections in children.



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