

# Sepsis Survey Reveals Majority Americans, Especially Those Under 35, Have Never Heard of One of Deadliest Killers in America

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TAMPA, Fla.--([BUSINESS WIRE](#))--**Sepsis kills 258,000 people every year** in the United States, more than prostate cancer, breast cancer, and lung cancer combined. Yet, according to a new poll commissioned by a leading patient advocacy group, fewer than half of all Americans have even heard of it.

[Sepsis Alliance](#) commissioned Harris Interactive to conduct online and telephone polling in June, 2012. Among 2,203 adults surveyed online, only 40% acknowledged that they had even heard of the term sepsis. “That means that three out of every five Americans are unsure what sepsis is, or have even heard of one of the deadliest killers in America,” said [Thomas Heymann](#), Board President of Sepsis Alliance.

Of the 40% of individuals that had heard of sepsis, 34% were unable to define it, while 51% incorrectly defined it as an “infection.” More startling, only 14% of the individuals familiar with the term provided responses classifying it as “serious,” “severe,” “dangerous,” or “critical.”

Sometimes referred to as [blood poisoning](#), sepsis is the body’s often-deadly response to infection or injury. When recognized early, thousands of lives can be saved by early treatment with fluids and antibiotics.

Several high-profile cases of individuals contracting sepsis have been featured in local and national media this past year. Yet, in Sepsis Alliance’s [2011 telephone survey](#) of sepsis awareness, sepsis awareness showed at 41%.

According to the Sepsis Alliance polling, recognition of sepsis differed significantly by gender. 35% of men had heard of sepsis, while 44% of women had heard of the disease.

“While greater education is needed across all American age groups, this is definitely true among younger adults,” says Regina A. Corso, SVP, Harris Poll.

25% of Americans age 18-34 had heard of sepsis. This level of sepsis recognition was significantly lower than other ages, including 44% for ages 35-44, 45% for ages 45-55, and 48% for individuals over 55.

As the polling reflects, there is additional progress to be made in increasing public awareness of sepsis. To recognize champions of sepsis awareness, Sepsis Alliance is hosting its first-ever [Sepsis Heroes](#) event next month in New York City. The event is being held on the **World Sepsis Day**, which has been declared on September 13, 2012, and will feature individuals and organizations that have made incredible strides in raising awareness of this deadly disease.

“Our survey shows that we still have a lot of work to do in educating the public about what sepsis is, how people get it, and how sepsis is treated,” added Heymann. “This is exactly why we need formal recognition by government of sepsis as not only a killer of thousands of lives, but also as a treatable driver of higher costs in the healthcare system.”

Full details on the Harris Interactive poll results are available online at:

<http://www.sepsisalliance.org>

## **Survey Methodology**

This survey was conducted online within the United States by Harris Interactive on behalf of Sepsis Alliance from June 13-15, 2012 among 2,203 adults ages 18 and older and by telephone within the United States from June 14-17, 2012 among 1,000 adults ages 18 and older. The online survey is not based on a probability sample and therefore no estimate of theoretical sampling error can be calculated. For complete survey methodology, including weighting variables, please [contact](#) Sepsis Alliance at 877-SEPSIS-1.

## **About Sepsis Alliance**

Sepsis Alliance is a nonprofit patient advocacy organization in the U.S. promoting awareness of sepsis. Sepsis Alliance operates by providing information and education to raise awareness of sepsis and its devastating effects, So More Survive. Sepsis Alliance also provides support by giving people affected by sepsis a forum to share information. Sepsis Alliance was founded by Dr. Carl Flatley after the loss of his 23 year-old daughter, Erin, to sepsis. Her death in 2002 spurred Dr. Flatley to start an organization that would promote awareness of sepsis to both medical professionals and patients. Sepsis Alliance is registered as a 501(c)(3) charitable organization, and is a founding member of the Global Sepsis Alliance. For more information on Sepsis Alliance, please visit [www.sepsisalliance.org](http://www.sepsisalliance.org).

## **About Harris Interactive**

Harris Interactive is one of the world's leading market research firms, leveraging research, technology, and business acumen to transform relevant insight into actionable foresight. Known widely for the Harris Poll® and for pioneering innovative research methodologies, Harris offers proprietary solutions in the areas of market and customer insight, corporate brand and reputation strategy, and marketing, advertising, public relations and communications research. Harris possesses expertise in a wide range of industries including health care, technology, public affairs, energy, telecommunications, financial services, insurance, media, retail, restaurant, and consumer package goods. Additionally, Harris has a portfolio of multi-client offerings that complement our custom solutions while maximizing our client's research investment. Serving clients in more than 215 countries and territories through our North American and European offices, Harris specializes in delivering research solutions that help us - and our clients - stay ahead of what's next. For more information, please visit [www.harrisinteractive.com](http://www.harrisinteractive.com).

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