

Post-Intensive Care Syndrome

Improving long-term outcomes after discharge from intensive care unit: Report from a stakeholders' conference*

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Background: Millions of patients are discharged from intensive care units annually. These intensive care survivors and their families frequently report a wide range of impairments in their health status which may last for months and years after hospital discharge.

Objectives: To report on a 2-day Society of Critical Care Medicine conference aimed at improving the long-term outcomes after critical illness for patients and their families.

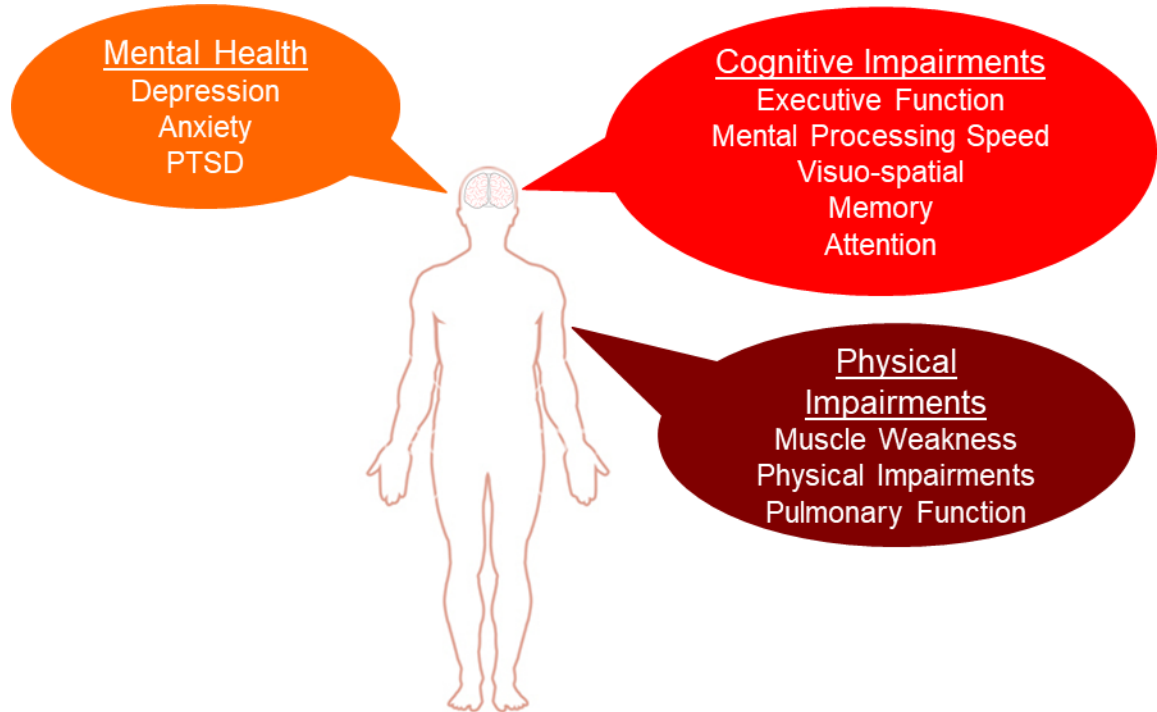
Participants: Thirty-one invited stakeholders participated in the conference. Stakeholders represented key professional organizations and groups, predominantly from North America, which are involved in the care of intensive care survivors after hospital discharge.

Design: Invited experts and Society of Critical Care Medicine members presented a summary of existing data regarding the potential long-term physical, cognitive and mental health problems after intensive care and the results from studies of postintensive care unit interventions to address these problems. Stakeholders provided reactions, perspectives, concerns and strategies aimed at improving care and mitigating these long-term health problems.

Measurements and Main Results: Three major themes emerged from the conference regarding: (1) raising awareness and education, (2) understanding and addressing barriers to practice, and (3) identifying research gaps and resources. Postintensive care syndrome was agreed upon as the recommended term to describe new or worsening problems in physical, cognitive, or mental health status arising after a critical illness and persisting beyond acute care hospitalization. The term could be applied to either a survivor or family member.

Conclusions: Improving care for intensive care survivors and their families requires collaboration between practitioners and researchers in both the inpatient and outpatient settings. Strategies were developed to address the major themes arising from the conference to improve outcomes for survivors and families. (Crit Care Med 2012; 40:502-509)

Key Words: aftercare; caregivers; continuity of patient care; critical care; follow-up studies; intensive care units; outcome assessment; patient care planning; patient care team; postintensive care syndrome; stress disorders; post-traumatic; survivors



*See also p. 681.
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Dr. Needham has received grant support from the National Institutes of Health. Dr. Bienvenu has received funding from the National Institutes of Health. Ms. Louis is employed by Kaiser Permanente. Dr. Muldoon is employed by and has stock ownership in Kindred Healthcare. The remaining authors have not disclosed any potential conflicts of interest.

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DOI: 10.1097/CCM.0b013e318232da75