Variability in Host Response Test Ordering Pattern in Emergency Department Workflows



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Introduction

- Sepsis is a dysregulated immune response to infection causing organ dysfunction¹. It is the leading cause of in-hospital death in the USA.
- Progression of sepsis is extremely fast, requiring rapid detection and treatment action to prevent resulting morbidity and mortality.
- The symptoms of sepsis are non-specific and may easily be mistaken for those of other life-threatening conditions.
- Most cases of sepsis present at emergency departments (ED), where there is a major unmet need for rapid sepsis risk assessment².
- It is known that immune cell activation alters biomechanical properties, and investigational tests based on this principle show promise³.
- This study evaluated the ordering patterns of a novel host response (HR) test within a protocolized screening and guideline-directed treatment pathway across
 five distinct EDs.

Methods

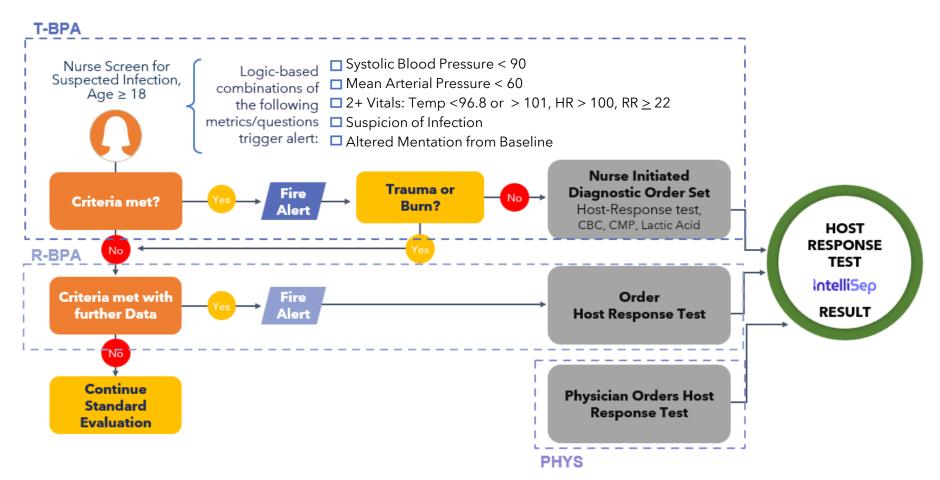


Figure 1: Protocolized screening pathway implemented at all 5 emergency departments within the same system.

The IntelliSep test

- The IntelliSep test is FDA-cleared⁴, semi-quantitative, and measures leukocyte biophysical properties via deformability cytometry to assess cellular host response.
- Intended for adults with suspected infection in the ED; aids in early detection of sepsis with organ dysfunction within 3 days of testing.
- Requires K2 EDTA whole blood; delivers an IntelliSep Index (ISI) score (0.1–10.0) in under 10 minutes.
- ISI score stratified into 3 bands: Band 1 (low risk) to Band 3 (high risk of sepsis with organ dysfunction)⁵.
- Neutrophil and monocyte properties (deformability, density, size) shift with degranulation, NET formation, or maturation, differing between septic and quiescent cells ⁶⁻⁸.

See the IntelliSep Test Instructions for Use for all cleared claims and performance data.

Adults presenting to ED at 5 sites

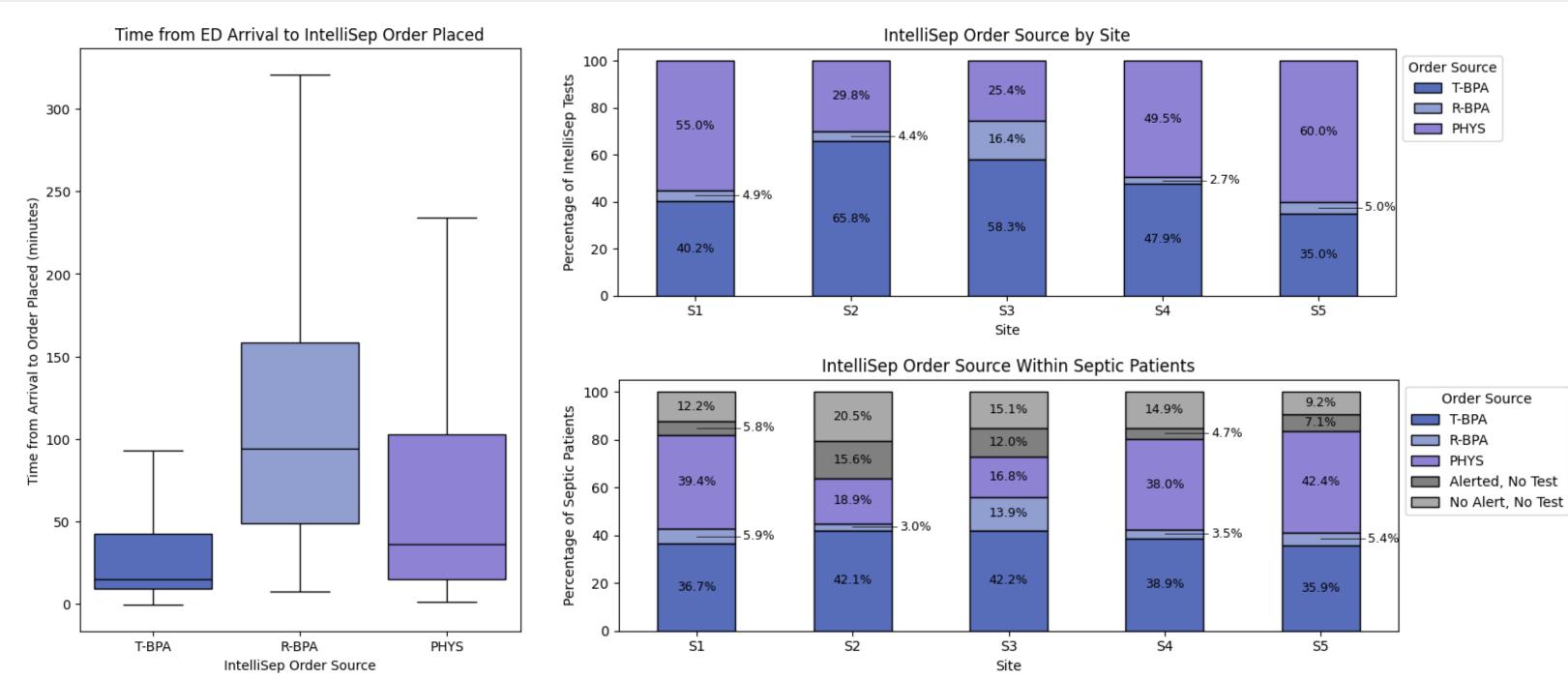
(Jul 2024 – Feb 2025)

Study Design & Setting

- Multisite implementation of sepsis host response test at **5 same-system emergency departments**: Baton Rouge, LA (S1), Lafayette, LA (S2), Monroe, LA (S3), Jackson, LA (S4), Gonzales, LA (S5).
- Initial test ordering via triage-based nurse-driven protocol (T-BPA), later transitioned to physiciandriven protocol (R-BPA).
- Independent physician ordering (PHYS) introduced on 7/1/2024 at S1, 11/13/2024 at S2, and 10/8/2024 at S3–S5. Data collection ran from the site PHYS start date through 2/17/2025.
- Sepsis diagnosis determined retrospectively using ICD-10-CM diagnosis codes.
- Design captured variation in test utilization and timing across sites and ordering pathways, enabling analysis of how physician-initiated testing improved detection of septic patients beyond protocol-driven alerts.

Results & Discussion

- Of 104,701 ED patients across five sites, 17,515 (16.8%) had a BPA fire and/or HR Test ordered, resulting in 13,135 completed tests.
- Test ordering was distributed as 45.1% T-BPA (5,922), 5.8% R-BPA (762), and 49.1% PHYS orders (6,451), with site-level variation in each pathway.
- Over 96% of PHYS orders (6,199) occurred without a prior alert, indicating provider-driven testing expanded beyond automated BPA protocols.
- Median time to order differed significantly: T-BPA 15.0 minutes, R-BPA 94.0 minutes, and PHYS 36.4 minutes, with PHYS generally intermediate.
- Among 3,444 septic patients, 38.4% were captured by T-BPA, 6.3% by R-BPA, and 33.9% by PHYS orders, with notable site-specific variation.
- An additional 21.4% of septic patients (738 individuals) were not captured by any testing pathway, underscoring persistent gaps in detection despite multiple ordering mechanisms.



Conclusions & Clinical Implications

- Independent physician ordering increased testing volume and improved capture of septic patients beyond protocol-based alerts
- Site-specific variation in utilization, timing, and alert performance persisted despite standardized workflows.
- Tailored implementation, including provider discretion outside protocols, is needed to optimize adoption, prevent missed cases, and improve early sepsis detection.

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank the providers and nursing staff of the Franciscan Missionaries of Our Lady Health System for their tireless efforts in adopting new process and technology to improve the care of our patients who present with signs or suspicion of infection.

References

¹ Singer *JAMA* 2016.

² Wang *Crit Care Med* 2017.

³ Crawford K Respir Crit Care Med. 2018.

⁴ 510(k) approval letter for IntelliSep test, 21 CFR 866.3215, 2022.

⁵ O'Neal, *AEM* 2024.

⁶ Sorrells, *Diagnostics.* 2023. ⁷ Camicia *SHOCK* 2014.

8 Granger *Leuk. Bio.* 2017.

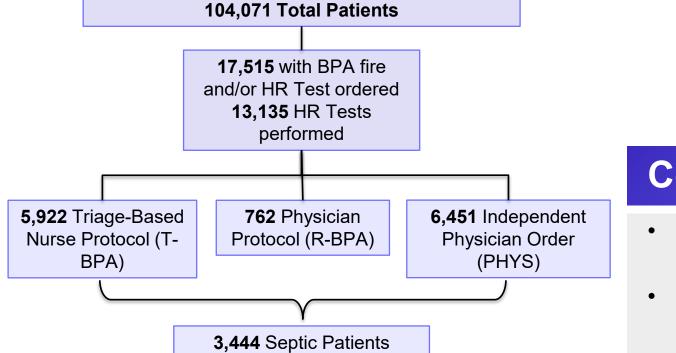


Figure 2: Flowchart of study cohort, test ordering pathways, and septic patients included in analysis.

Identified (ICD-10 Codes)