

## PRESS RELEASE: NEW CLINICAL GUIDELINES FOR MANAGING ACUTE RESPIRATORY DISTRESS SYNDROME, INCLUDING THAT INDUCED BY COVID-19 DISEASE

Acute respiratory distress syndrome (ARDS) is a life-threatening lung condition that leads to severe respiratory failure, which has become particularly familiar as a consequence of SARS-CoV-2 infection. Considering the new knowledge advancements brought by the COVID-19 pandemic, a panel of international experts appointed by the European Society of Intensive Care Medicine (ESICM) has developed new clinical practice guidelines<sup>1</sup> for the optimal management of ARDS patients.

ARDS can be found in different pathologies with the same clinical characteristics and accounts for approximately 10% of admissions to intensive care units (ICU), with mortality up to 45% in the severe category and a decreased quality of life for the survivors. The COVID-19 pandemic has created the largest cohort of ICU survivors, most of whom have survived ARDS.

At this stage of development in the management of ARDS and developments in the new strategies to protect the lungs while treating ARDS, a consensus among experts is necessary. An international panel appointed by ESICM, supported by two methodologists and eight patient representatives, reviewed and summarised the knowledge acquired over the last 30 years and updated the previous clinical practice guidelines formulated in 2017.

The main novelty concerns the discussion around the definition and phenotyping of ARDS, which is particularly relevant to guide patient care in poor-resource settings, where access to mechanical ventilation is limited, and to identify cases that would better profit from non-invasive strategies.

The ESICM guidelines also highlight the need to generate more precise effect estimates for many aspects of respiratory support. All patients with ARDS are susceptible to additional lung injury induced by mechanical ventilation. Therefore, lung-protective strategies are designed to reduce mechanical stress and lung tissue damage to a minimum.

"These guidelines align with ESICM's long-standing commitment to advancing the standards of care of critically ill patients", says ESICM President Elie Azoulay. "The new guidelines will allow healthcare professionals across every ICU and hospital to better identify ARDS syndromes, treat them more effectively and improve patient care".

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<sup>1</sup> Grasselli, G., Calfee, C.S., Camporota, L. *et al.* ESICM guidelines on acute respiratory distress syndrome: definition, phenotyping and respiratory support strategies. *Intensive Care Med* (2023). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s00134-023-07050-7>

### Notes to Editors:

***The European Society of Intensive Care Medicine (ESICM)** supports and promotes the advancement of knowledge in intensive care medicine, in particular the promotion of the highest standards of multidisciplinary care of critically ill patients and their families through education, research and professional development.*

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