Relative numbers of deaths per day from 999 patients with severe sepsis or septic shock according to ACCP/SCCM criteria are shown from the day of onset/diagnosis until observation day 36. Three phases were defined characterized by the nadir at day 5 and day 15. Further the average rates of positive blood cultures without CNS in a 5-days period with respect to sampling times are shown. bc, blood cultures; CNS, Coagulase negative staphylococci; #, numbers; %, relative number.