

Sickle cell disease in children: home management strategies of caregivers in the tamale teaching hospital

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Abstract

Sickle Cell Disease (SCD) is a serious genetic and inherited disorder. It has physical, psychological and socio-economic impact on affected individuals including children and families. Globally, over, 200, 000 babies are born with SCD annually. In Ghana, about 15, 000 newborns are diagnosed with SCD annually. Although extensive studies have been conducted on the burden on parents with children with SCD, little is known on how parents manage the disease among their children at home since new modalities of management are not widely used in Ghana.

This study explored the knowledge of caregivers of children with sickle cell disease, how they recognize/monitor complications of sickle cell disease, and management strategies at home.

An explorative qualitative study using non-probability purposive method was used to interview fourteen (14) caregivers of children with sickle cell disease who were recruited from the Tamale Teaching Hospital. In-depth interviews using an interview guide was used. A tape recorder was used to record each interview yielding a total of fourteen (14) audios. Audio-tapes were transcribed verbatim. Data collected during these interviews were analyzed using inductive thematic content analysis. Caregivers' have adequate knowledge on the signs and symptoms of SCD, its complications and the various types their children have but fall short of knowledge on the cause of SCD. Knowledge acquired on SCD does not translate into caregivers' ability to effectively identify and monitor crisis or complications at home. Home management strategies used by caregivers' were both medicinal and non-medicinal and some used combination to manage pain and monitor the health of their children. Even though majority have used traditional medicine before, they prefer conventional orthodox interventions which they consider more effective.

Biography:

Stephanie Ajinkpang is a member of Ghana College of Nurses and Midwives who specialized in Paediatric Nursing. She is currently working at the Tamale Teaching Hospital, Ghana as a Paediatric Nurse Specialist. She is involved in organizing specialist consultation for sickle cell children in her department

[2nd International Conference on Pediatrics and Primary Healthcare Nursing Webinar- December 11, 2020](#)

Abstract Citation:

Stephanie Ajinkpang, Sickle cell disease in children: home management strategies of caregivers in the tamale teaching hospital, Pediatrics & Nursing 2020, 2nd International Conference on Pediatrics and Primary Healthcare Nursing, December 11, 2020

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