

For Immediate Release



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## **AUB and world experts address the transition from pediatric to adult medical care for patients with sickle cell disease**

The Lancet Haematology Journal published an invited review that provides an overview of transition of young adults with sickle cell disease (SCD) from pediatric to adult medical care. The article highlights barriers to effective transition of care and provides recommendations that can be adapted to local needs.

The review was authored by a team of international experts, from the African Research and Innovative Initiative for Sickle cell Education (ARISE), led by Dr. Baba Inusa, pediatric consultant at Evelina London Children's Hospital and professor of paediatric haematology in King's School of Life Course Sciences, and including Dr. Miguel R. Abboud, professor and chairman of the Department of Pediatrics and Adolescent Medicine at the American University of Beirut Medical Center (AUBMC).

Sickle cell disease is an inherited, lifelong, and life-threatening blood disease that manifests in early childhood. It continues to cause serious complications throughout the person's life, having an impact on their entire body and damaging multiple organ systems. The disease has been designated as a public health priority by the World Health Organization (WHO).

Children and adults with sickle cell disease require close follow-up and sufficient resources, as the disease puts them at risk of having unpredictable pain crises that require hospital admission and treatment; strokes and severe problems with different organs such as the lungs and eyes; as well as an increased risk of death due to infections.

The transition from pediatric to adult medical care for patients with SCD presents significant challenges. The authors developed a set of recommendations under the acronym "SICKLE" that highlight priorities to be considered by programs planning transition of young persons with sickle cell disease from pediatric to adult health care, such as: Skills transfer, Increasing self-efficacy, Coordination, Knowledge transfer, Linking to adult services, and Evaluating readiness.

These recommendations aim to ensure appropriate benchmarking of transition programming, but multisite prospective studies are needed to address this growing public health need.

“This review is a landmark, it systematically highlights the problems faced by young people with sickle cell disease, which lead to increased mortality in early adulthood. It also established a framework for collaboration to develop programs that will tackle the challenges confronted by patients with SCD in different settings all over the world,” commented Dr. Miguel R. Abboud.

AUBMC continues to play a leading role in providing comprehensive care for SCD patients, regardless of their financial situation, through its Sickle Cell Program and fund established in 2012. It provides latest advances in SCD treatment, in addition to ensuring equal access to healthcare, preventing complications, treating existing problems caused by the disease, and educating families. Such care has been shown to prolong the survival of patients. The program focuses on early detection and prevention, and provides regular follow-up for physical assessment, counseling, blood tests, imaging, and adequate treatment.

More information about the review published by The Lancet Haematology Journal can be found on this link: [http://www.thelancet.com/journals/lanhae/article/PIIS2352-3026\(20\)30036-3/fulltext](http://www.thelancet.com/journals/lanhae/article/PIIS2352-3026(20)30036-3/fulltext)

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Text by Sally Abou Melhem  
Writer  
Office of communications  
American University of Beirut

**For more information please contact:**

Simon Kachar  
Director of News and Media Relations  
Mobile: (+961) 3-427-024  
Office: (+961) 1-374-374 ext: 2676  
Email: [sk158@aub.edu.lb](mailto:sk158@aub.edu.lb)

## Note to Editors

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Founded in 1866, the American University of Beirut bases its educational philosophy, standards, and practices on the American liberal arts model of higher education. A teaching-centered research university, AUB has more than 900 full-time faculty members and a student body of about 9,100 students. AUB currently offers more than 120 programs leading to bachelor's, master's, MD, and PhD degrees. It provides medical education and training to students from throughout the region at its Medical Center that includes a full-service 420-bed hospital.

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