# Guidelines for the Immediate Management of Paediatric Patients with Sickle Cell Disease (SCD) and Acute Neurological Symptoms

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<tr>
<th>Document Information</th>
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<td><strong>Version:</strong></td>
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| **Authors (incl. job title):** | Sue Height Consultant Paediatric Haematologist  
Prof David Rees Honorary Consultant Paediatric Haematologist |
| **Responsible committee:** | Child Health Clinical Governance & Risk Committee |
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For Child Health Clinical Guidelines Groups’ use only

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For Evidence Based Practice Committee use only

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Document History

Document replaces: 1 Sept 2012

Consultation distribution (before ratification)

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<th>Sent to</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>Professor Rees</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Sept 2014</td>
<td>Agreed</td>
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</table>

Reviews and updates (including CGG comments)

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>New version no.</th>
<th>Summary of Changes</th>
<th>Author of change/s</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sept 2014</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Minor changes – addition of cardiolipin and b2 microglobulin antibodies</td>
<td>Sue Height</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Including neck vessels in neuro-imaging and TCDs</td>
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<td>Need to contact on call anaesthetist for GA for MRI</td>
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Dissemination schedule (after ratification)

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<tr>
<th>Target audience(s)</th>
<th>Method</th>
<th>Person responsible</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Paediatric Medical, Haematology and Nursing staff</td>
<td>On Kings Guidelines System</td>
<td>Guidelines process</td>
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Guidelines for the Immediate Management of Paediatric Patients with Sickle Cell Disease (SCD) and Acute Neurological Symptoms

Abstract Page

Background
This guideline is intended to assist medical and nursing staff in the immediate assessment and management of patients with sickle cell disease and acute neurological symptoms under the care of the paediatric haematologists at King’s College Hospital.

Contents of guideline (quick reference guide to determine if guideline is useful to reader)
Definition
Presentation
Immediate Investigation and Management
Additional Investigations
Subsequent Investigations to be arranged
Further Management
Guidelines for the Immediate Management of Paediatric Patients with Sickle Cell Disease (SCD) and Acute Neurological Symptoms

Definition/Background
This guideline is intended to assist medical and nursing staff in the immediate assessment and management of patients with sickle cell disease and acute neurological symptoms under the care of the paediatric haematologists at King's College Hospital.

Cerebrovascular Accident (CVA) - neurological event lasting >24hrs +/- new areas of abnormality on scan
Transient Ischaemic Attack (TIA) - focal event lasting <24hrs with no abnormality on scan

- The peak age for CVA is 2-7 years, and occurs in 8% of children with SCD.
- The anterior cerebral circulation is most commonly involved, leading to weakness, paraesthesiae, speech or behavioural abnormalities.
- Visual symptoms can occur in isolation and should prompt an urgent assessment

Pre – Requisites for Practitioner
This is intended for paediatric, haematology medical and nursing staff

Indications
Child with Sickle Cell Anaemia presenting with neurological symptoms who may have had a CVA or TIA

Contra-Indications
No Contraindication

Equipment required
No particular equipment is required
Presentation

The usual presentation is a child who is well, and has either weakness not associated with pain, or a history of a TIA – in some cases the history from the parents may be the only indication of a problem.

If either diagnosis is suspected there is a need for urgent management – admit, investigate and treat pending results of investigations.

Less commonly, patients are clinically sick in association with a neurological event which may include stroke, consider the following alternative/additional diagnoses and investigate and treat accordingly:

- Meningitis or encephalitis, fit or febrile convulsion, syncope, SAH, vaso-occlusion of calvarium, cerebral malaria, trauma, fat embolism, hypoglycaemia, drugs, abscess, or tumour.

Immediate Investigation and Management

- Admit to HDU
- BM stix, iv access and send urgent blood tests:
  - FBC, reticulocytes and film
  - Blood group (ABO, RhD and Kell) & antibody screen and urgent cross-match (request sickle negative blood).
  - Urgent exchange transfusion – contact PICU – protocol will be individualised for patients taking into account starting Hb and clinical condition.
  - DAX and CRP
  - INR/APTR/Fibrinogen and D-Dimers,
  - Haemoglobin analysis for HbS%, HbF% if patient not known to King’s
  - Consider malaria screen, auto- and ds DNA antibodies, cardiolipin and beta2 microglobulin antibodies.
- Supportive treatment - iv fluids to maintain blood glucose, O₂, treat fever aggressively
- Neurological observations, BP and O₂ saturations
- Assess and secure airway (discuss with PICU urgently if reduced consciousness)
- Urgent CNS imaging (discuss with neuroradiology), usually urgent CT scan to exclude bleed or tumour first, and then arrange MRI/MRA of head and including neck vessels (sickle protocol). This usually requires GA or sedation for children <7years, and should not be performed until the child is clinically stable and the blood transfusion completed.
- If there is likely to be a delay in arranging the exchange, and the Hb is <8 g/dl, then an urgent top-up transfusion to Hb 10g/dl should be undertaken.
- Perform exchange transfusion as soon as blood is available - discuss with PICU
- If the CT scan shows an intracranial bleed, request an urgent neurosurgical opinion and intervention as necessary. Exchange transfusion will still be necessary but may be performed before, during or after the surgery depending on the urgency and timing of surgery.
- Steroids, aspirin, mannitol or hyperventilation are not routinely indicated for the management of ischaemic CVA in SCD
- Request paediatric neurology review as in-patient
**Additional investigations:**

- Urinalysis
- Viral serology - HSV, VZV, CMV, Parvovirus, Hepatitis A, B and C.
- Blood, urine and throat swab for cultures and ASO titre if febrile
- Consider LP after imaging if meningitis suspected
- Transcranial Doppler (TCDs) and assessment of extracranial vessels: discuss with vascular lab (Ext 33711)
- Urine & serum drug screen if altered mental status with no explanation

**Subsequent investigations to be arranged**

- MRI/MRA including neck vessels and perfusion-weighted images (discuss with Dr Jarosz or Dr Sibtain – consultant neuro-radiologists). Children <7~8 years may require GA and the ward paediatric staff will need to contact the on-call anaesthetist.
- TCDs including extracranial ICAs if not performed already
- ECG
- Sleep Study – contact Children’s Community Nursing Team or discuss with respiratory team if remaining as an inpatient with possible OSA on ward.
- Trans-thoracic cardiac echo (discuss with Paediatric Cardiology Team at Evelina and download referral from ECH cardiology website to fax across). Further investigations may be needed to exclude a Patent Foramen Ovale – bubble studies or trans-oesophageal echo (under GA) – discuss with paediatric cardiology team at Evelina.

**Further Management:**

- Arrange for regular transfusions on Philip Isaacs’ Ward (Ext 34200)
- Referral to Dr Keith Pohl, Consultant Paediatric Neurologist c/o Paediatric Haematology Secretary, KCH.
- Physiotherapy, Speech & Language Therapy Occupational Therapy referrals for assessment and treatment.
- Neuropsychometric Assessment – referral to Clinical Psychologist with Sickle Cell Team.

Referrals from other hospitals – arrange transfer to HDU directly with plan for exchange transfusion. Discuss with paediatric haematology consultant first.