

Sickle cell and adult stem cell transplant. Finally, a cure...

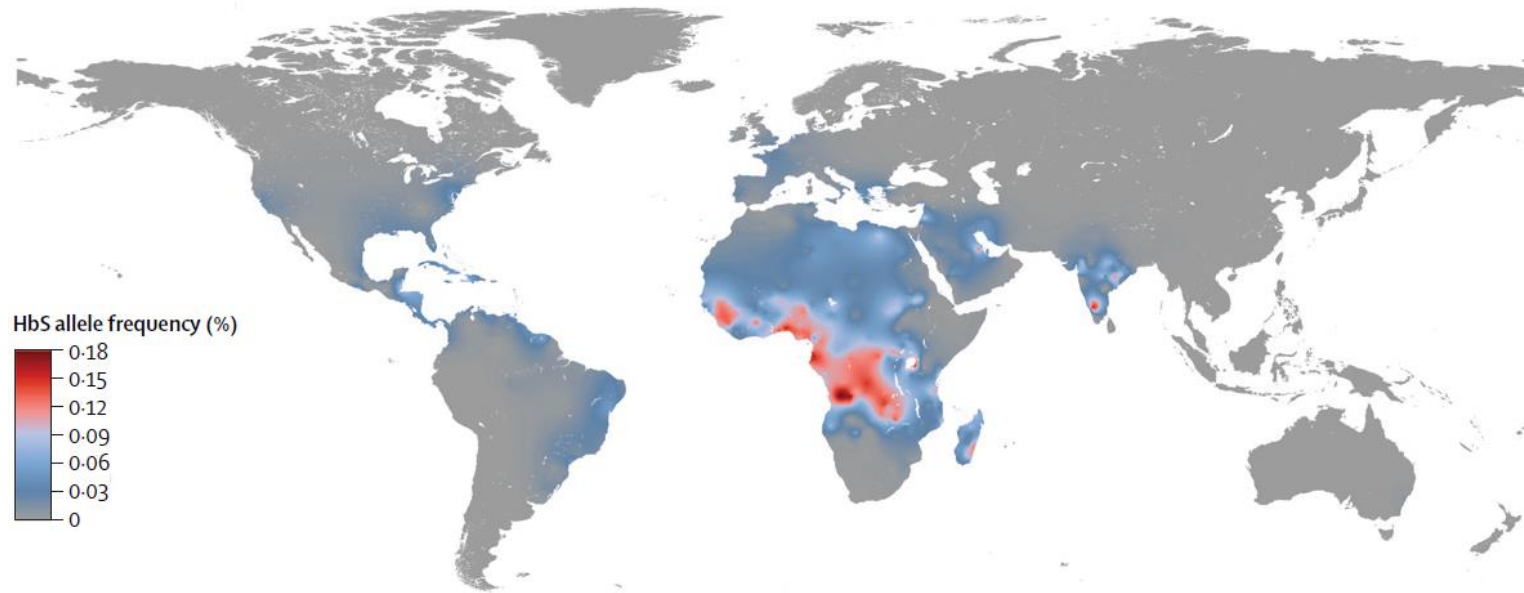
Dr Steven Okoli
Imperial College NHS Trust, London

Objectives

- Pathology of sickle cell disease
 - Current treatment landscape
 - Cellular therapies
 - Stem cell transplant and challenges
 - Stem cell transplant options
 - Clinical trial data in cellular therapies
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Epidemiology

- Most common and most rapidly growing monogenetic disorder worldwide¹
- More than 17,000 cases in UK²
 - 70% in London
- UK children surviving to adulthood (~99%)³

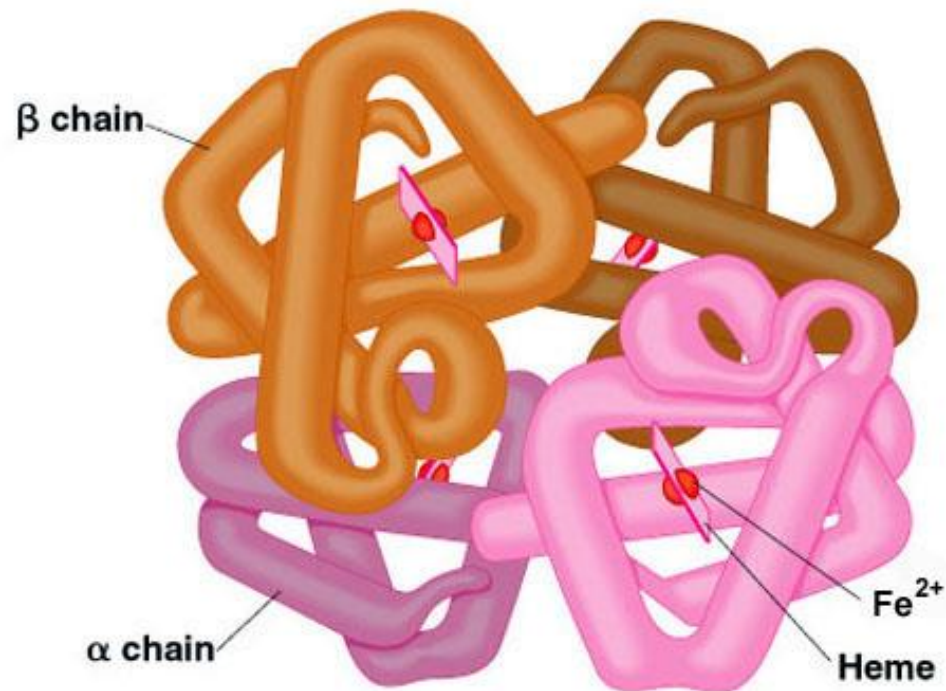


HbS, sickle haemoglobin.

1. Piel FB, et al. *Lancet* 2013;381:142–151; 2. NHS England data, June 2023; 3. Telfer P, et al. *Haematologica* 2007; 92:905–912.

Pathology

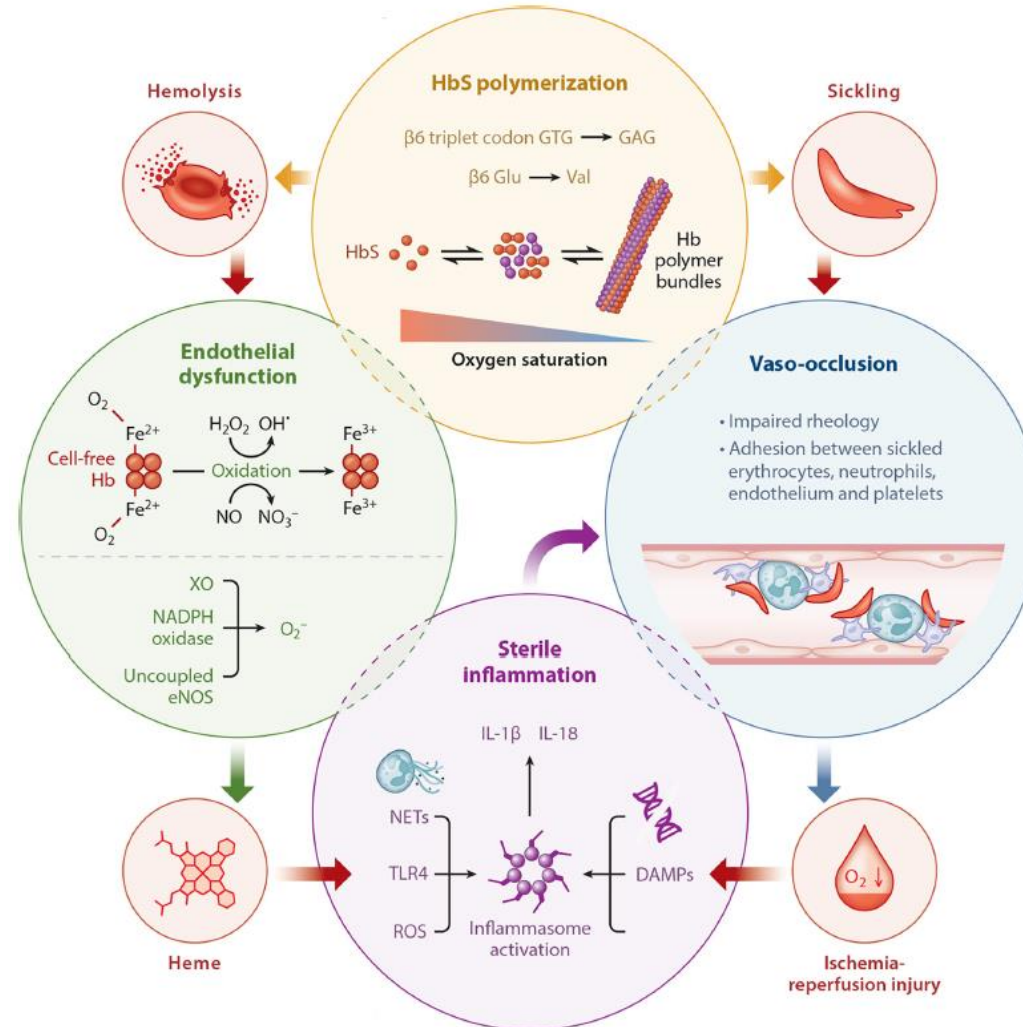
Adult Haemoglobin



2 α and 2 β globin chains each with a central haem

- SNP at **Chr 11p** with A→T in the β -globin chain of haemoglobin
- Replace hydrophilic glutamic acid with hydrophobic valine at sixth position

SCD pathology¹



DAMP, damage-associated molecular pattern; eNOS, endothelial nitric oxide synthase; Glu, glutamic acid; Hb, haemoglobin; HbS, sickle haemoglobin; IL, interleukin; NADPH, nicotinamide adenine dinucleotide phosphate; NET, neutrophil extracellular traps; ROS, reactive oxygen species; SCD, sickle cell disease; TLR, Toll-like receptor; Val, valine.

1. Sundd P, et al. *Annu Rev Pathol* 2019;14:263–292.

Complications



Pain

Impact of sickle cell disease

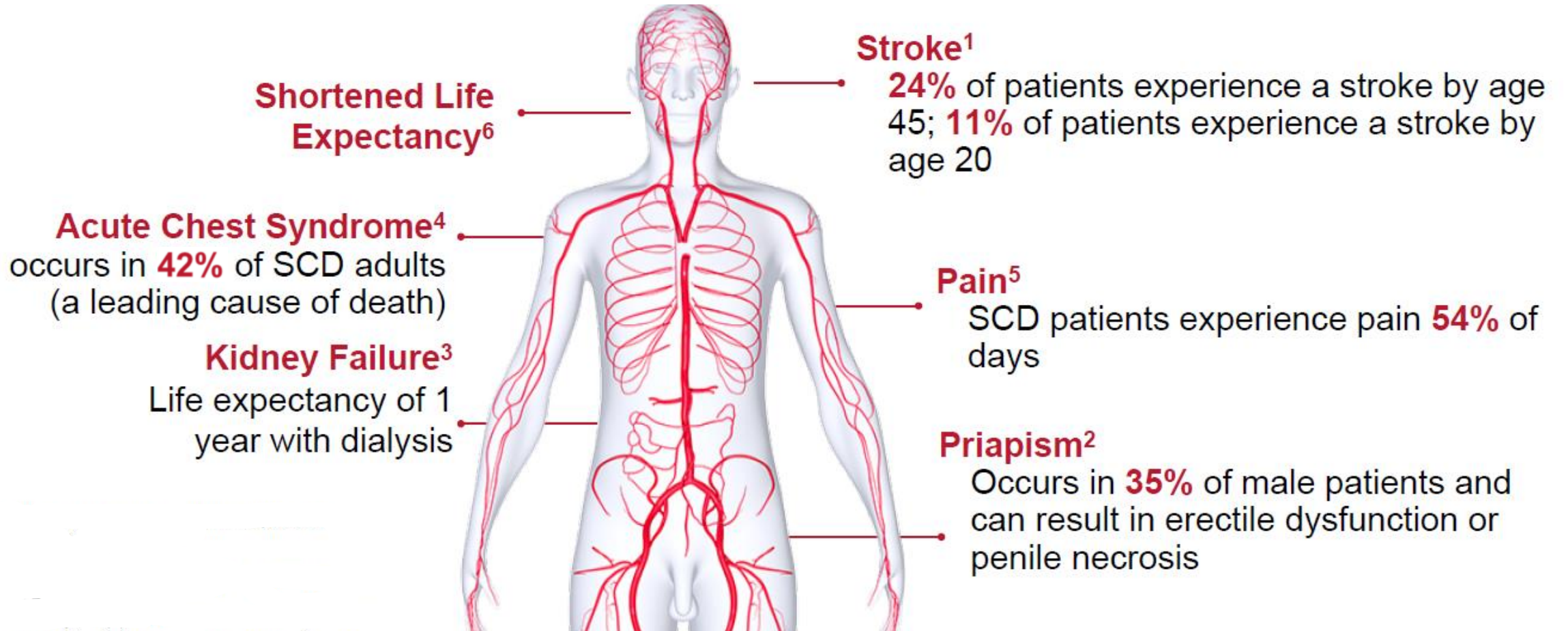


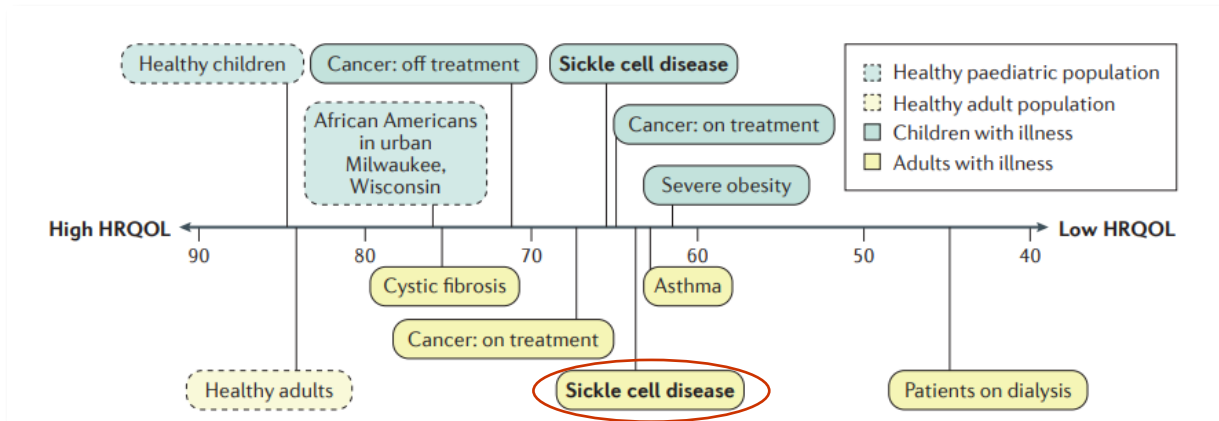
Figure provided by speaker. SCD, sickle cell disease.

1. Verduzco LA, et al. *Blood*. 2009;114:5117–5125; 2. Adeyoku AB, et al. *BJU Int*. 2002;90:898–902; 3. McClellan AC, et al. *Br J Haematol*.

2012;159:360–367; 4. Vichinsky EP, et al. *N Engl J Med*. 2000;342:1855–1865; 5. Ballas SK, et al. *Blood*. 2012;120:3647–3656;

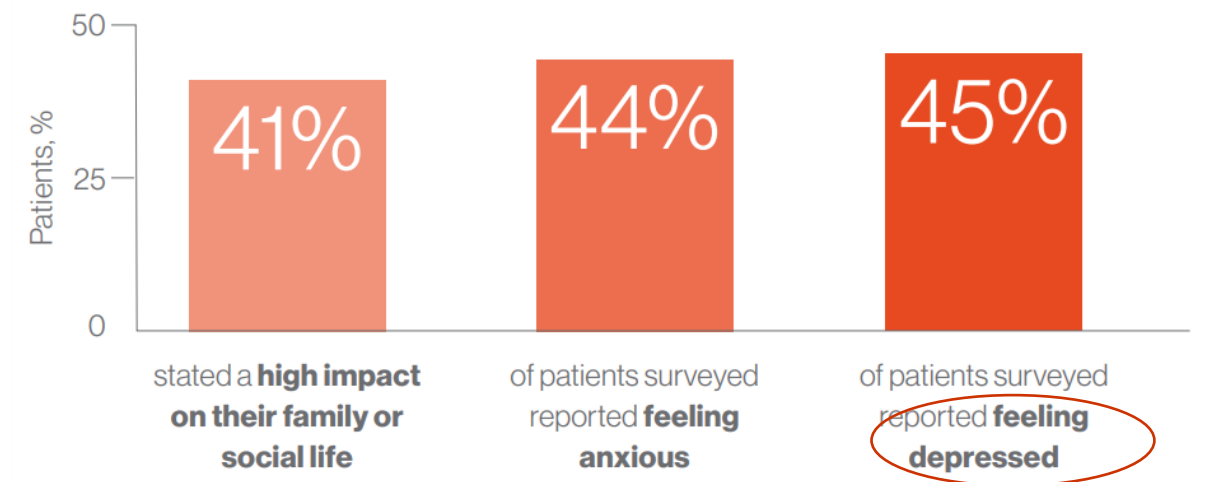
6. Elmariah H, et al. *Am J Hematol*. 2014;89:530–535.

Impact of SCD on QoL^{1,2}



Burden Beyond Physical²

Sickle cell disease has a **substantial impact on patients' emotional well-being and daily life**



HRQOL, health-related quality of life; QoL, quality of life; SCD, sickle cell disease.

1. Kato GJ, et al. *Nature* 2018;4:1–22; 2. Osunkwo I, et al. Poster presented at: The American Society of Hematology Annual Meeting; December 7–10, 2019.

Patient case study

34-year-old male

- Sickle cell disease (HbSS)
- Frequent painful crises in childhood
- Recurrent acute chest syndromes

Commenced on hydroxycarbamide (2009)

- Further ACS requiring ITU admission
- Discontinued (2011)

Red cell exchange programme commenced

Hepatic iron overload

- Good compliance with oral chelation therapy
-

Patient case study continued

- 6-weekly red cell exchange programme (2016)
 - Pneumonia and acute chest syndrome (2018)
 - Urgent red cell exchange and ITU admission for NIV
- Bilateral femoral head AVN (2017)
 - Core decompression
- New AVN left humoral head (2022)
- Echocardiogram (2024)
 - dilated cardiac chambers
 - Mild RWMA with EF 50%
 - chronic pulmonary hypertension

SCD survival over time¹

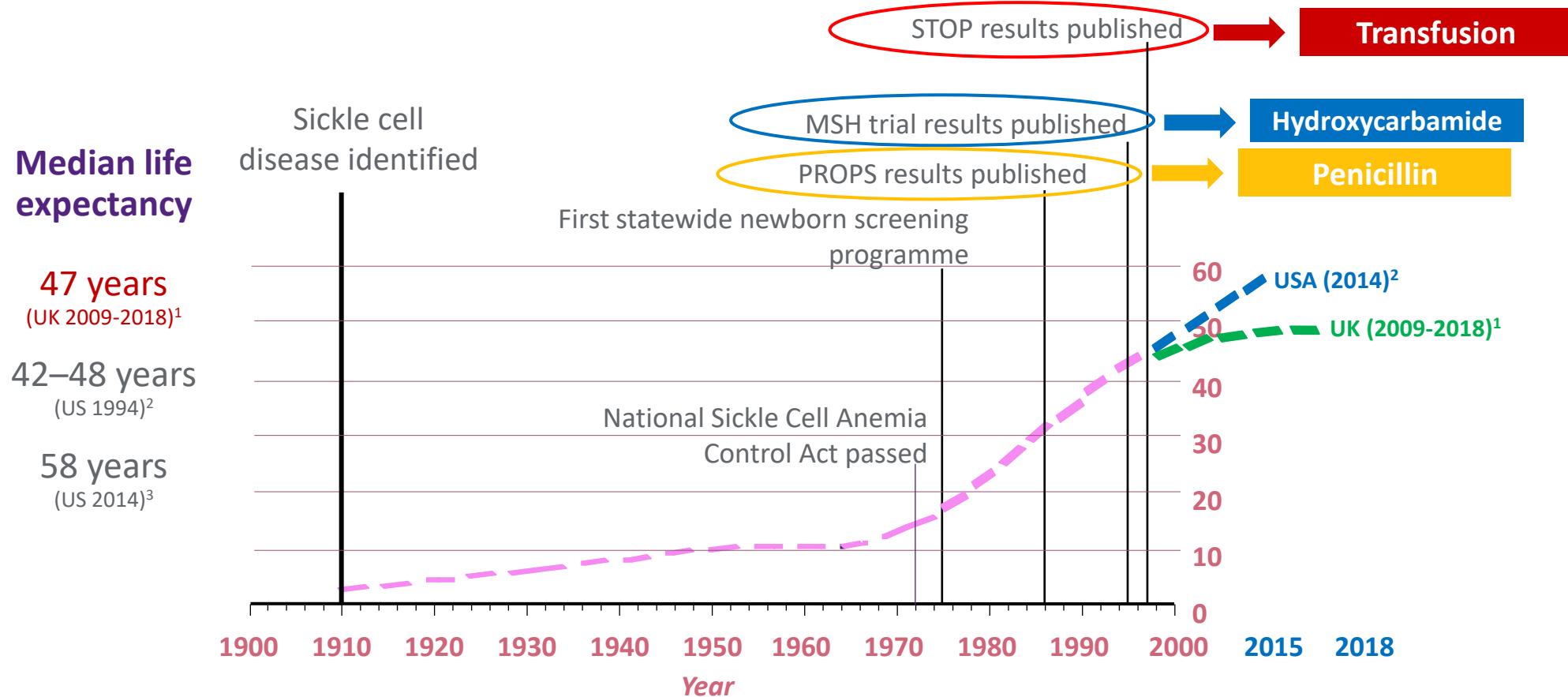
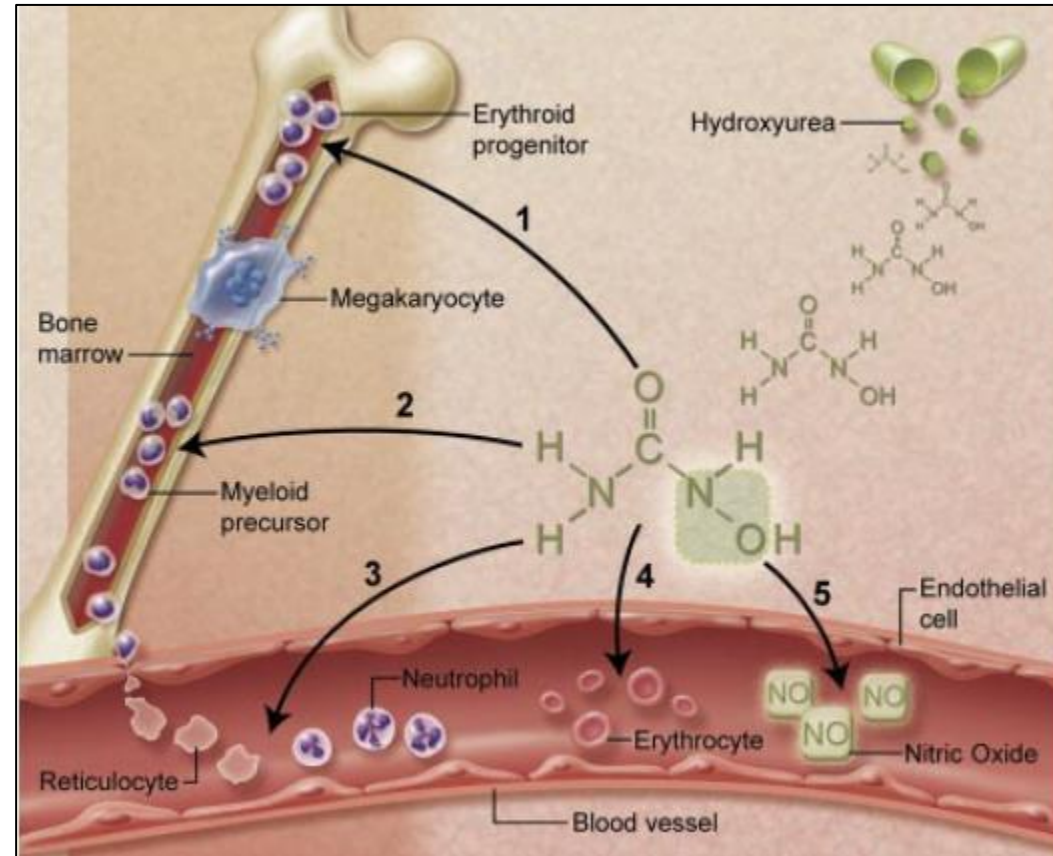


Figure provided by speaker. HES, hospital episode statistics; MSH, Multicenter Study of Hydroxyurea; PROPS, Penicillin Prophylaxis in Sickle Cell Disease; STOP, Stroke Prevention Study; SCD, sickle cell disease. 1. Piel FB, et al. *Blood Cells Mol Dis*. 2021;89:2–7; 2. Platt OS, et al. *N Engl J Med* 1994;330:1639-1644; 3. Elmariah H, et al. *Am J Hematol* 2014;89:530–535.

Current treatments

Hydroxycarbamide in SCD: Multiple modes of action¹⁻³

- Increases HbF production
- Improved red cell hydration
- Reduced neutrophil count
- Modifies endothelial cell interactions
- Acts as a nitric oxide donor



HbF, foetal haemoglobin; SCD, sickle cell disease.

1. Ware Re. *Blood* 2010;115:5300–5311; 2. Xromi SmPC. Available at: https://www.ema.europa.eu/en/documents/product-information/xromi-epar-product-information_en.pdf. Accessed November 2023; 3. Siklos SmPC. Available at: https://www.ema.europa.eu/en/documents/product-information/siklos-epar-product-information_en.pdf. Accessed November 2023.

Hydroxycarbamide



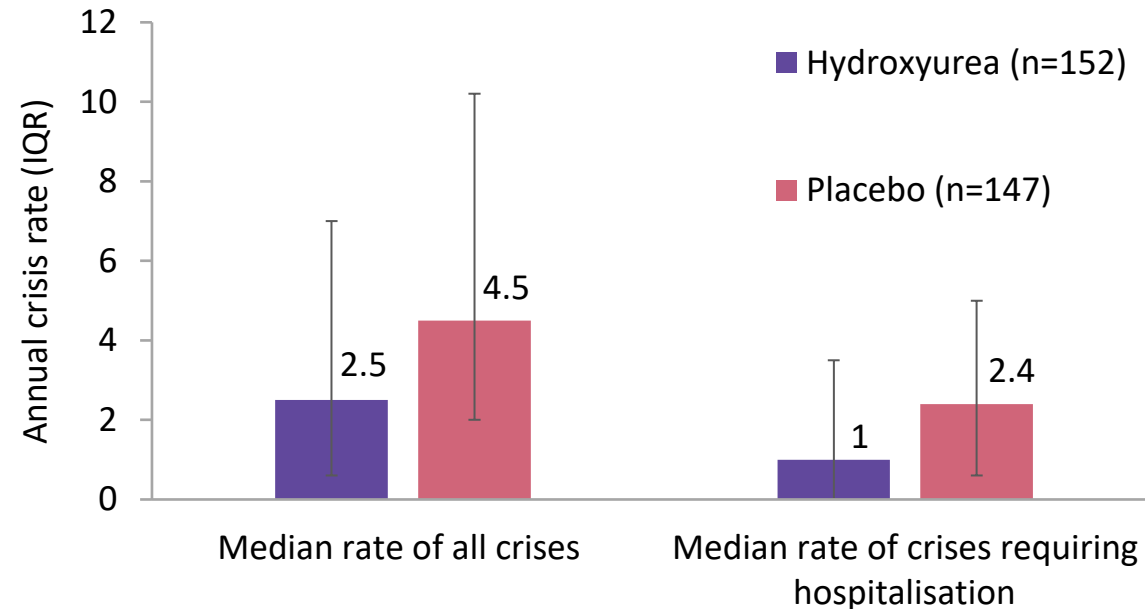
Hydroxycarbamide^{1,2} vs placebo³

- Reduced painful crises (33%)^{2,3}
- Reduced acute chest syndrome (50%)^{3,4}
- Ongoing organ damage³
- Improved mortality and morbidity⁴

Limitations

- Side effects^{1,2}
- Tolerance⁵
- Non-adherence⁵
- Misconceptions⁵

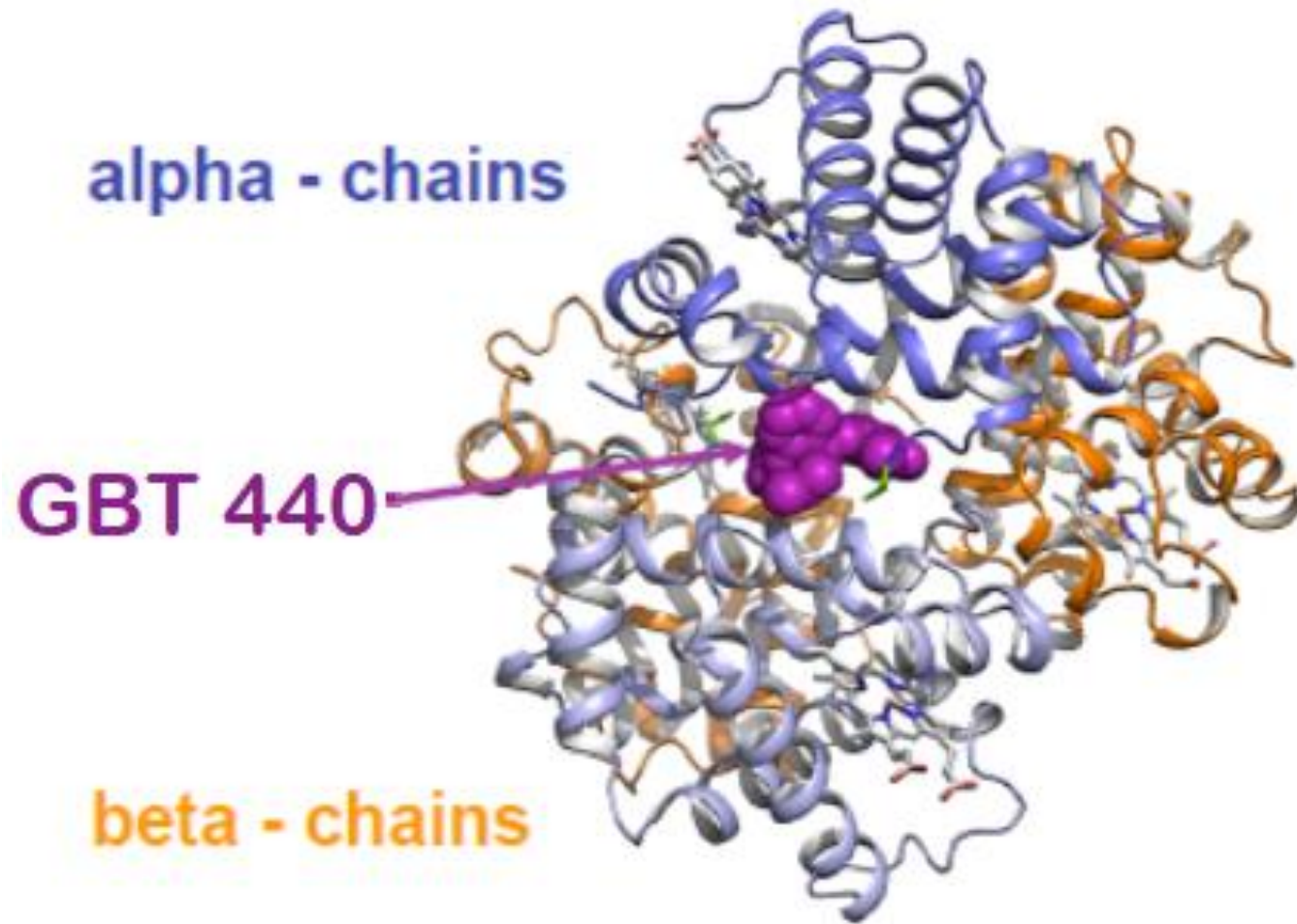
Phase 3 MSH trial³



MSH, Multicentre Study of Hydroxyurea.

1. Xromi SmPC. Available at: https://www.ema.europa.eu/en/documents/product-information/xromi-epar-product-information_en.pdf. Accessed November 2023; 2. Siklos SmPC. Available at: https://www.ema.europa.eu/en/documents/product-information/siklos-epar-product-information_en.pdf. Accessed November 2023; 3. Charache S, et al. *N Engl J Med* 1995;332:1317–1322; 4. Steinberg MH, et al. *JAMA* 2003;289:1645–1651; 5. Jose J, et al. *Oman Med J* 2019;34(4):327–335.

Voxelotor



HOPE study



Phase 3, multicentre, placebo controlled study

274 patients (low dose: high dose: placebo)
12-65 years
1-10 VOC in last 12 months
Severe sickle phenotypes



Primary end point

Proportion to achieve Hb response (>10g/l) by week 24



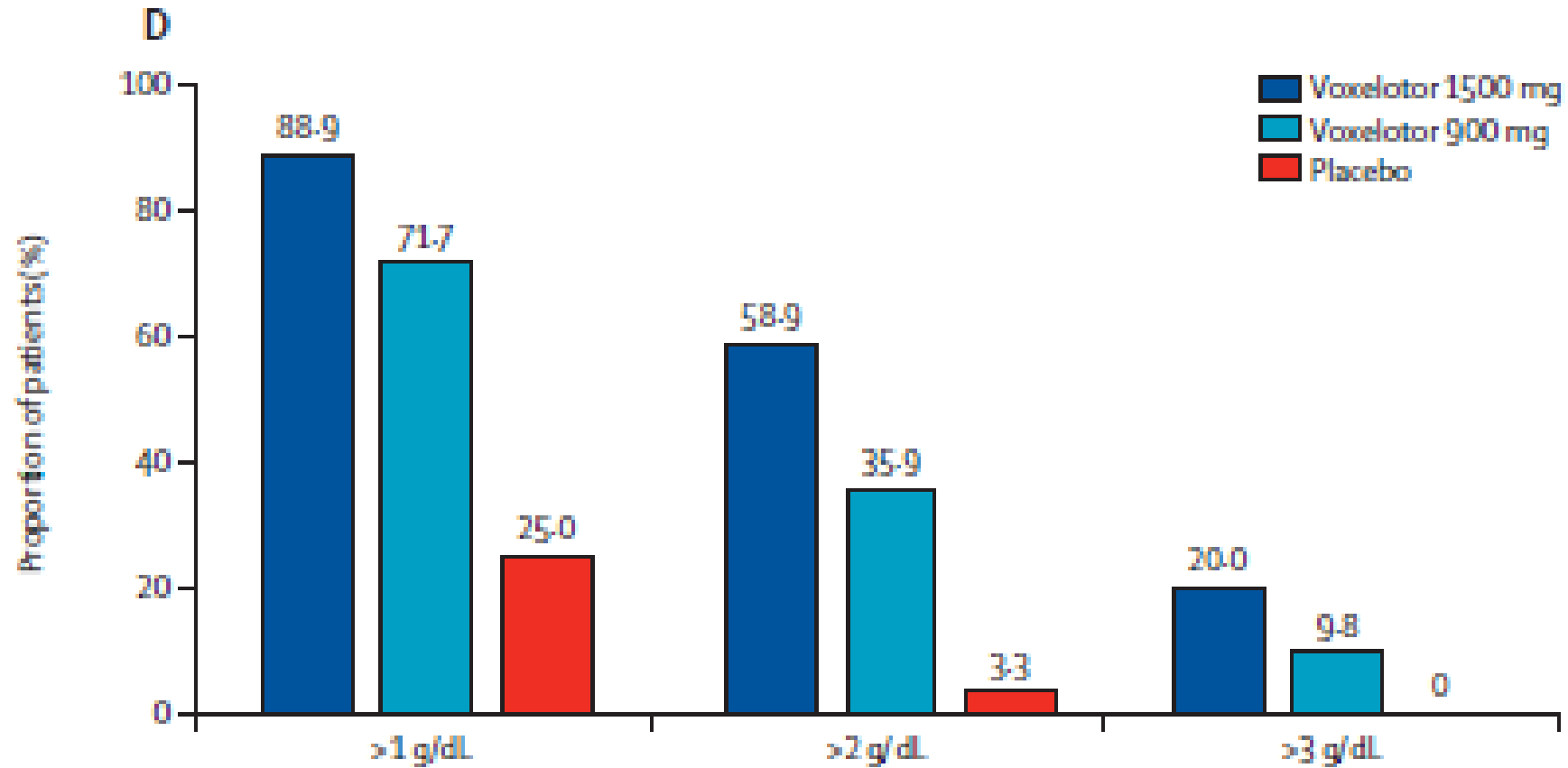
Secondary end points

Reduction in haemolytic markers
Reduction in annualised incidence rate of vaso-occlusive crises



Followed up - 72 weeks

Hb rise at 24 weeks

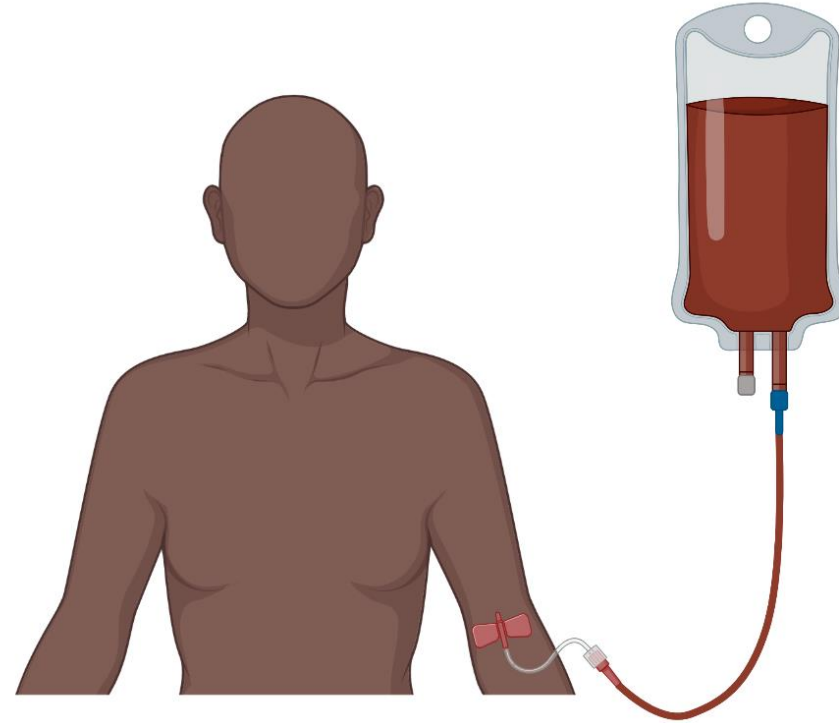


SCD, sickle cell disease.

1. Howard J. *ISBT Science Series* 2013;8:225–228.

Transfusion in SCD¹

- Top up/exchange
- Problems:
 - Red cell antibodies
 - Delayed transfusion reactions
 - Iron overload
 - Infections



Comorbidities in subgroups¹

Patient cohort	Crises sub-cohort*	Transfusions sub-cohort*	Crises + transfusions sub-cohorts*	Other SCD sub-cohort	Entire cohort
Patients (n)	1171	201	1372	8131	9503
Males (n)	562	101	663	3761	4424
Occurrence of co-morbidity*					
Acute chest syndrome	53.9%	30.8%	50.5%	24.3%	28.1%
Osteonecrosis	31.3%	10.4% ^{ns}	28.2%	9.9%	12.6%
Cardiomegaly	24.9%	10.0% ^{ns}	22.7%	9.9%	11.7%
Sepsis	26.1%	16.9%	24.8%	8.8%	11.1%
Acute renal failure	18.4%	14.9%	17.9%	7.4%	8.9%
Retinal disorders	13.3%	10.0% ^{ns}	12.8%	8.0%	8.7%
Cerebrovascular symptoms	11.6%	51.2%	17.4%	6.5%	8.1%
Priapism ^a	17.3%	11.9%	16.4%	5.6%	7.3%
Depression & anxiety	18.5%	9.0%	17.1%	5.6%	7.3%
Hyposplenism	16.1%	11.4%	15.4%	5.5%	7.0%
Pulmonary hypertension	12.3%	10.0%	12.0%	5.2%	6.1%
Chronic kidney disease	7.0%	11.9%	7.7%	4.8%	5.2%
Stroke	5.5%	19.4%	7.5%	3.2%	3.8%
Number of co-morbidities					
Any co-morbidity	85.2%	86.6%	85.4%	51.5%	56.4%
1 co-morbidity	22.0%	30.3%	23.3%	26.2%	25.8%
2 co-morbidities	21.9%	25.4%	22.4%	12.7%	14.1%
3 co-morbidities	14.2%	13.9%	14.1%	6.2%	7.4%
4+ co-morbidities	27.2%	16.9%	25.7%	6.4%	9.2%
No co-morbidities	14.8%	13.4%	14.6%	48.5%	43.6%
Mean no. of co-morbidities	2.5	2.1	2.4	1.0	1.2
Median no. of co-morbidities (IQR)	2 (1–4)	2 (1–3)	2 (1–4)	1 (0–2)	1 (0–2)

*All results statistically significantly different ($p < 0.05$) vs. other SCD sub-cohort unless noted. ^a % of males. IQR, interquartile range; ns, not significant; SCD, sickle cell disease.

1. Piel FB, et al. *Blood Cells Mol Dis* 2021;89:2–7.

10-year mortality subgroups¹

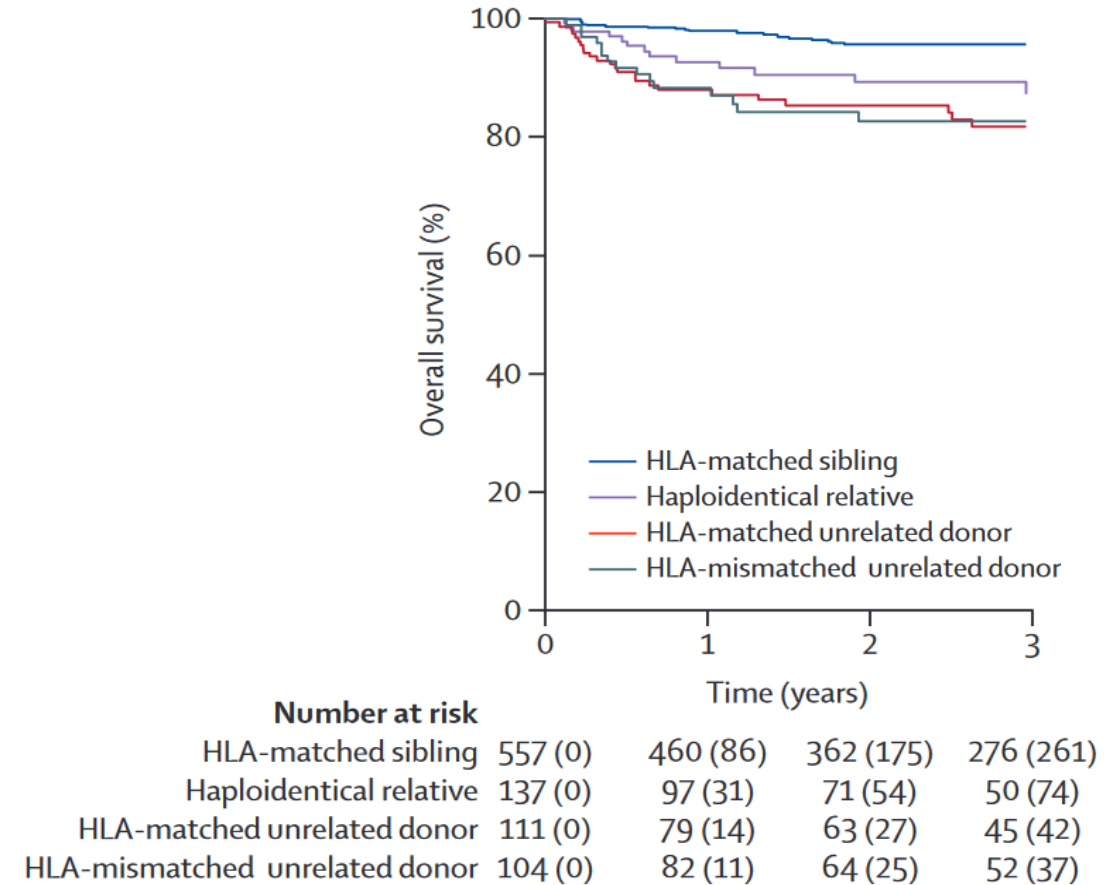
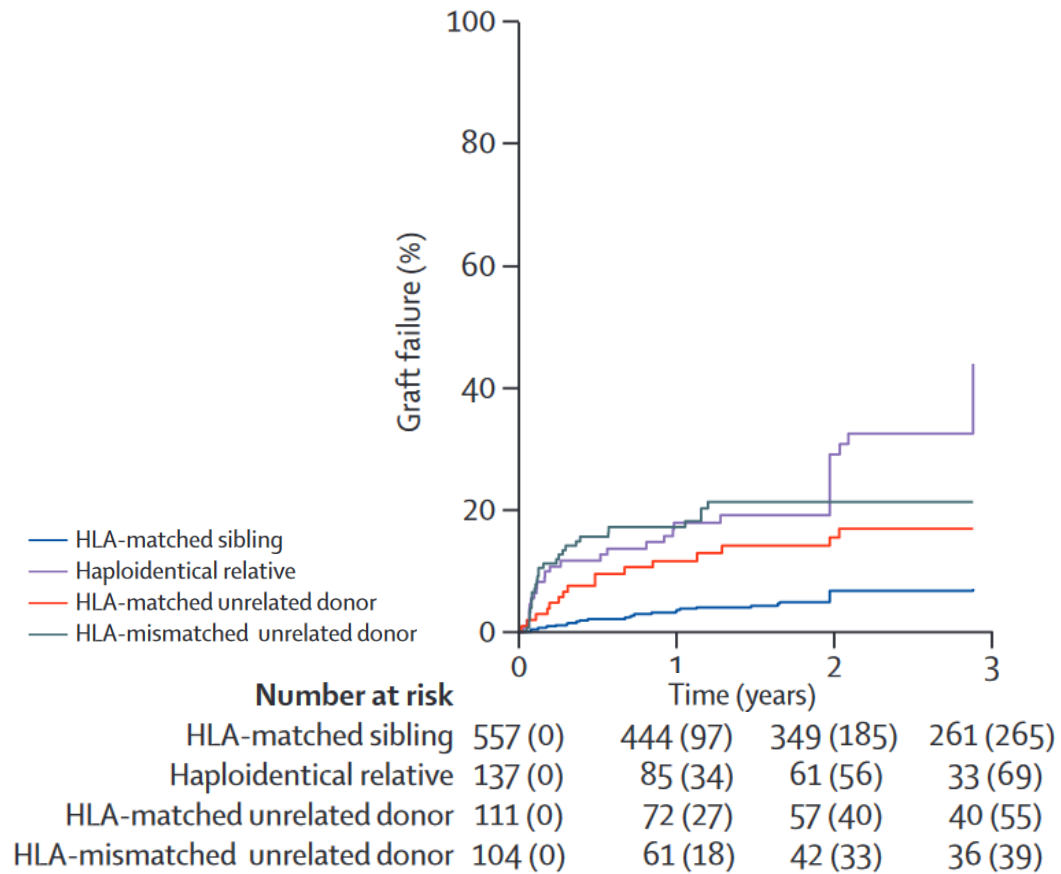
Age in 2009	Crises sub-cohort				Transfusions sub-cohort				Crises + transfusions sub-cohorts				Other SCD sub-cohort				Entire cohort			
	n.	Died	%*	E&W% ^a	n.	Died	%*	E&W% ^a	n.	Died	%*	E&W% ^a	n.	Died	%*	E&W% ^a	n.	Died	%*	E&W% ^a
0-9	172	2	1.2% ^{ns}	0.2%	49	1	2.0%	0.1%	221	3	1.4%	0.2%	2163	21	1.0%	0.2%	2384	24	1.0%	0.2%
10-19	320	15	4.7%	0.3%	70	1	1.4% ^{ns}	0.3%	390	16	4.1%	0.3%	1748	40	2.3%	0.3%	2138	56	2.6%	0.3%
20-29	324	14	4.3%	0.5%	25	5	20.0%	0.5%	349	19	5.4%	0.5%	1560	45	2.9%	0.5%	1909	64	3.4%	0.5%
30-39	212	31	14.6%	1.1%	22	2	9.1%	1.2%	234	33	14.1%	1.1%	1136	53	4.7%	1.1%	1370	86	6.3%	1.1%
40-49	114	25	21.9%	2.2%	22	7	31.8%	2.5%	136	32	23.5%	2.3%	989	99	10.0%	2.4%	1125	131	11.6%	2.3%
50+	29	7	24.1%	9.0%	13	7	53.8%	10.6%	42	14	33.3%	9.5%	535	132	24.7%	13.7%	577	146	25.3%	13.4%
Total	1171	94	8.0%	0.9%	201	23	11.4%	1.3%	1372	117	8.5%	0.9%	8131	390	4.8%	1.5%	9503	507	5.3%	1.5%

E&W, England and Wales; SCD, sickle cell disease.

1. Piel FB, et al. *Blood Cells Mol Dis* 2021;89:2-7.

Stem cell transplantation

Effect of donor type and conditioning regimen intensity on allogeneic transplantation outcomes in SCD patients



Sickle cell cellular therapies - current status

	12-18 years	≥19 years
Sibling HSCT	✓	✓
Haploidentical HSCT	✓	Trial
Unrelated HSCT	✓	✗
CRISPR gene editing	?*	?*

Sibling transplant

Non-myeloablative sibling donor transplant in sickle cell disease

Research

Original Investigation

Nonmyeloablative HLA-Matched Sibling Allogeneic Hematopoietic Stem Cell Transplantation for Severe Sickle Cell Phenotype

Matthew M. Hsieh, MD; Courtney D. Fitzhugh, MD; R. Patrick Weitzel, PhD; Mary E. Link, BSN; Wynona A. Coles, MPH; Xiongce Zhao, PhD;
Griffin P. Rodgers, MD; Jonathan D. Powell, MD; John F. Tisdale, MD

Biol Blood Marrow Transplant 25 (2019) 1179–1186



Biology of Blood and
Marrow Transplantation

journal homepage: www.bbmt.org



Nonmyeloablative Matched Sibling Donor Hematopoietic Cell
Transplantation in Children and Adolescents with Sickle Cell Disease

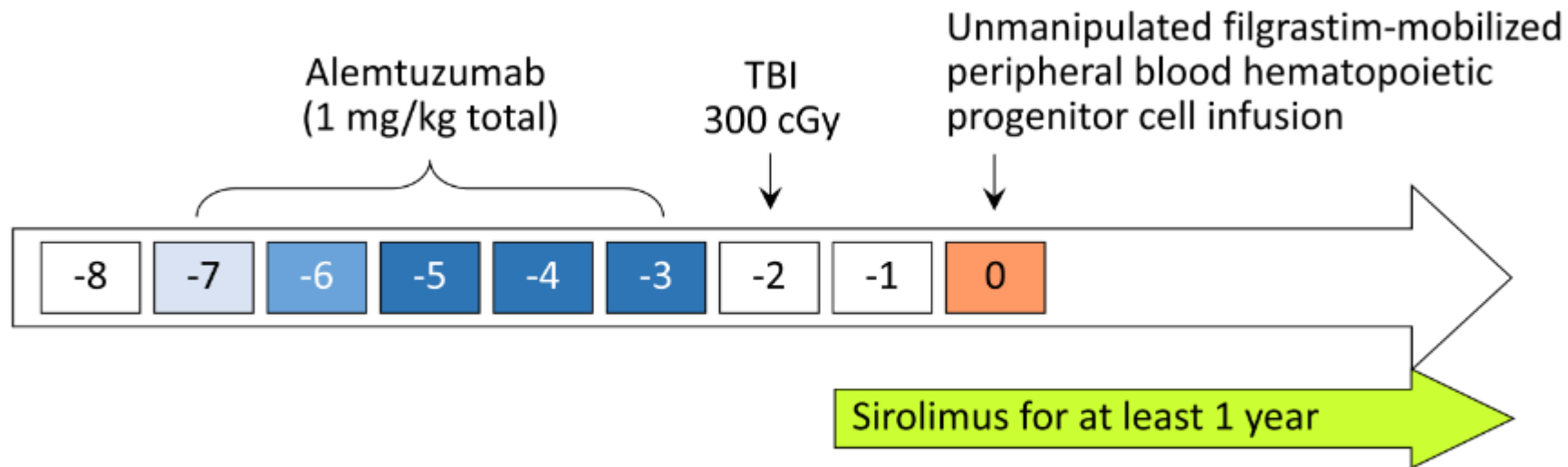
Gregory M.T. Guilcher^{1,*}, Dania A. Monagel², Alberto Nettel-Aguirre², Tony H. Truong¹,



Sibling allograft – Campath/TBI schedule

bjh research paper

Non-myeloablative human leukocyte antigen-matched related donor transplantation in sickle cell disease: outcomes from three independent centres



Patient characteristics

- 2 US centres and 1 Saudi centre
- 122 patients
 - 101 HbSS (83%)
 - 72 (59%) male, 50 (41%) female
 - Median age in years (range): 29 (10–65)

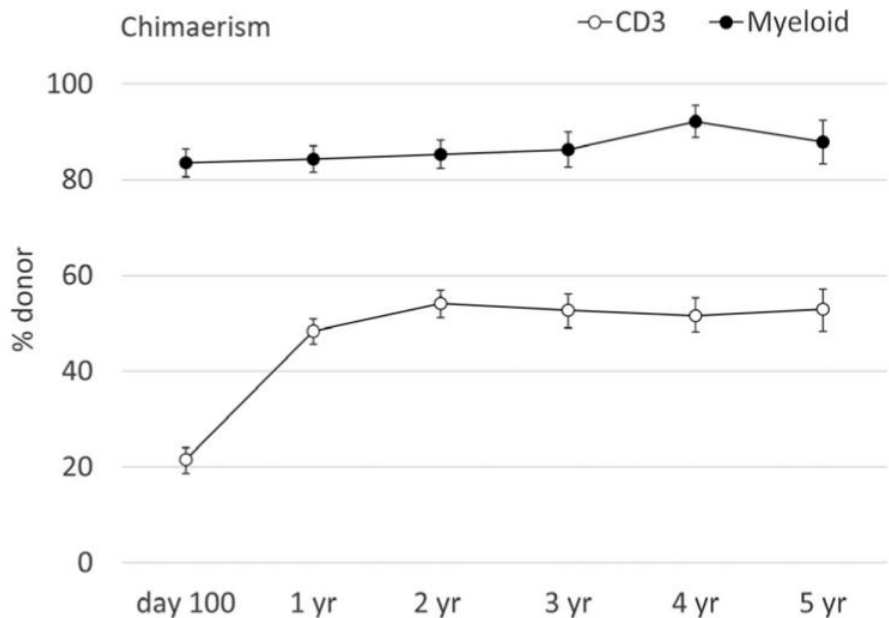
Indications:

- >2 pain episodes per year: 107 (88%)
- Chest syndrome: 43 (35%)
- Stroke: 26 (21%)
- Cerebral vasculopathy: 18 (15%)

- Additional liver, renal and AVN complications also seen in study population

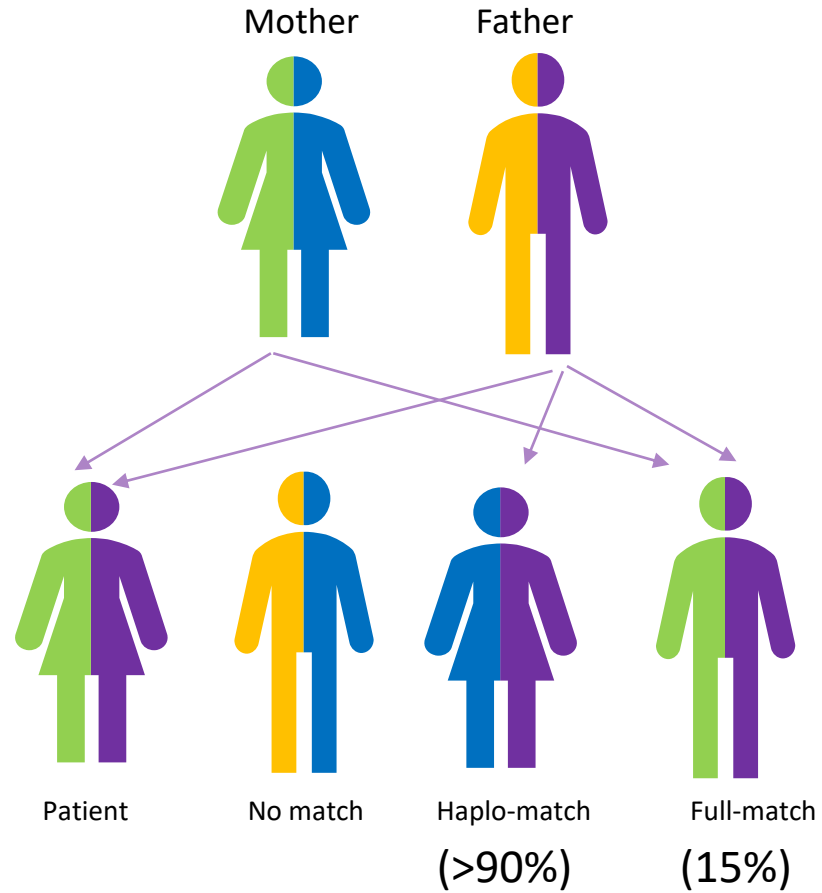
Results

Donor white cell chimerism



- Engraftment between day 8–39
- 16 patients (13%) experienced graft failure, 3 patients near to or beyond 1 year
- 2 patients had low grade GvHD - resolving with topical therapy
- Infectious complications were limited and manageable
- **Late effects:**
- 2 MDS (1 previous allogeneic HSCT) - both had graft failure
- 1 CML (recipient origin)
- Fertility - 21 pregnancies (7 male and 7 females)
- 7 deaths, 5 after graft failure. 2 sickle-related, 1 aplasia, 2 MDS and haemorrhage, 2 sudden deaths

Donor identification challenges - HLA system



Patient case study continued

- Number of family members tissue typed – six
 - Two parents and four siblings
 - Four haploidentical matches
 - both parents
 - sister and brother
 - Brother selected
 - shared phenotypic haplotype (HLA-A*23; B*15; C*16; DRB1*11; DQB1*03)
 - No DSA
 - 27 years old
 - Sex matched
 - O⁺
 - CMV matched
-

Haploidentical transplant

REDRESS (NCT05392894): Assessing the effects of related haplo-donor haematopoietic stem cell transplantation vs. SOC on treatment failure in SCD



King's College Hospital
NHS Foundation Trust



Ongoing Trial

PROTOCOL FULL TITLE

A multi-centre open randomised controlled trial to assess the effect of related haplo-donor haematopoietic stem cell transplantation versus standard of care (no transplant) on treatment failure at 24 month in adults with severe sickle cell disease

Protocol Short Title

RElated haplo-DonoR haematopoietic stEm cell transplantation for adults with Severe Sickle cell disease (REDRESS).

REDRESS

120 patients randomised 1:1 to HSCT or best supportive care¹

REDRESS study

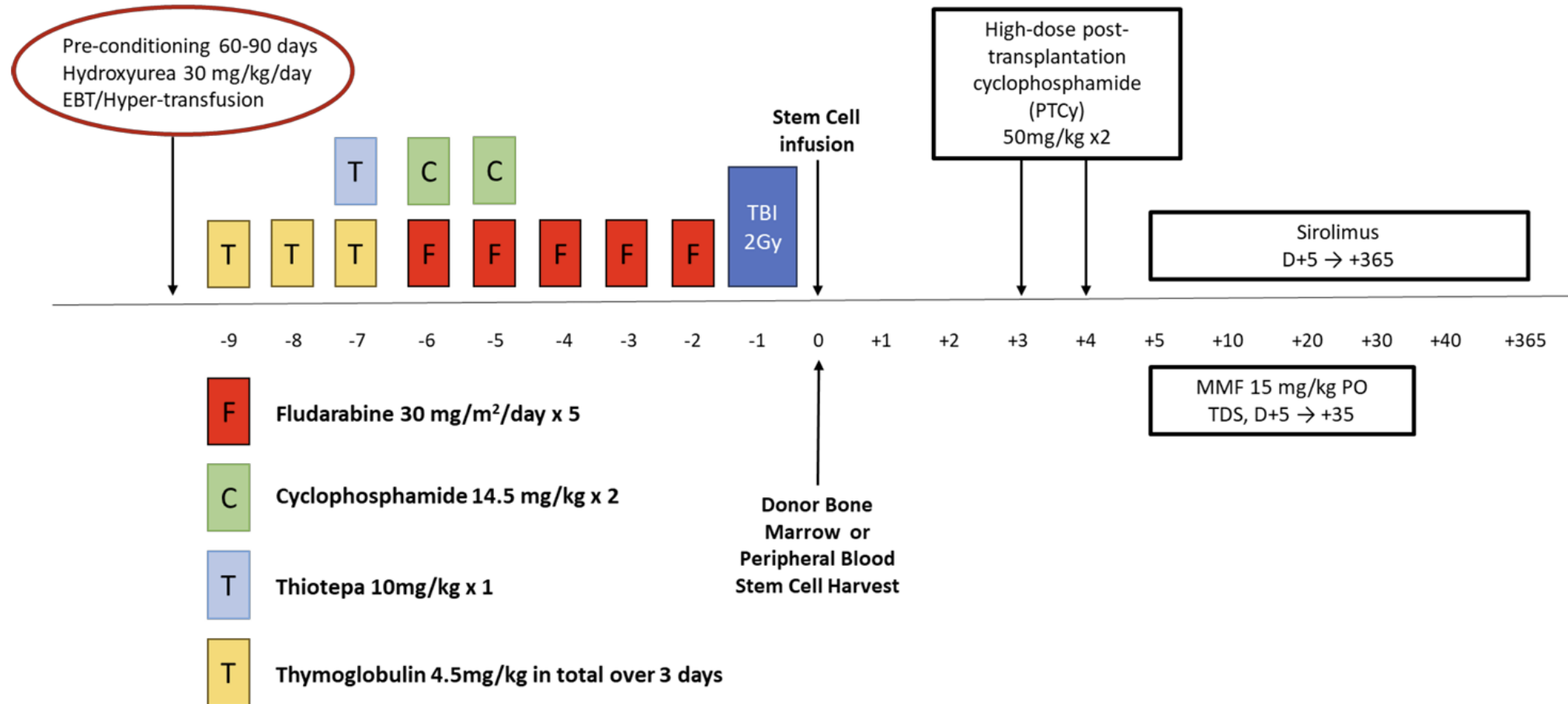
Main Inclusion Criteria:

- **>18 years old.**
- **Confirmed haploidentical donor.**
- **Severe SCD phenotype who are at high risk for morbidity and mortality. Severe SCD is defined by at least one of the following:**
 - Clinically significant neurologic event (stroke) or deficit lasting > 24 hours.
 - History of ≥ 2 acute chest syndromes in a 2-year period preceding enrolment despite optimum treatment, e.g. with HU
 - History of ≥ 3 severe pain crises per year in a 2-year period preceding enrolment despite the institution of supportive care measures (e.g. optimum treatment with HC).
 - Administration of regular transfusion therapy (=8 packed red blood transfusions per year for 1 year to prevent VOCs).
 - Patients assessed as requiring transfusion but with red cell allo-antibodies/very rare blood type, rendering it difficult to continue/commence chronic transfusion.
 - Patients requiring HC/transfusion for treatment of SCD complications who cannot tolerate either therapy due to significant adverse reactions.
 - Established end organ damage relating to SCD, including but not limited to progressive sickle vasculopathy and hepatopathy.

Primary exclusion criteria:

- Fully matched sibling donor.
- Previous bone marrow transplant.
- Clinically significant donor specific HLA antibodies.
- Active blood borne viruses.
- Uncontrolled bacterial, fungal or viral infection.
- Pre-existing condition deemed to significantly increase the risk of haploidentical SCT by the local PI.

Haploidentical allograft – Vanderbilt schedule



PTCy (post-transplant cyclophosphamide), MMF (mycophenolate mofetil), PO (by mouth), TID (three times a day), TBI (total body irradiation)

Patient case study continued

<u>Therapy</u>	<u>Days</u>	<u>Dates</u>	<u>Dosage (dose)</u>
ATG	-9 only	05-May-24	0.5 mg/kg (40 mg)
ATG	-8 to -7	06-May-24 to 07-May-24	2 mg/kg (160 mg)
Thiotepa	-7 only	7-May-24	10 mg/kg (790 mg) od iv
Fludarabine	-6 to -2	8-May-24 to 12-May-24	30 mg/m ² (60 mg) od iv
Cyclophosphamide	-6 to -5	8-May-24 to 09-May-24	14.5 mg/kg (1120 mg) od iv
TBI	-1 only	13-May-24	Total 2 Gy
MESNA	3 to +4	17-May-24 to 18-May-24	50 mg/kg (4200 mg) bd iv
Cyclophosphamide	3 to +4	17-May-24 to 18-May-24	50 mg/kg (4180 mg) od iv
Sirolimus	5 to +365	19-May-24 to 18-May-25	5 mg po daily
Mycophenolate (MMF)	+5 to +35	19-May-24 to 18-Jun-24	15 mg/kg (1000 mg) tds iv or po

Reduced Intensity Haploidentical HSCT in Adults with Severe Sickle Cell Disease: CTN 1507

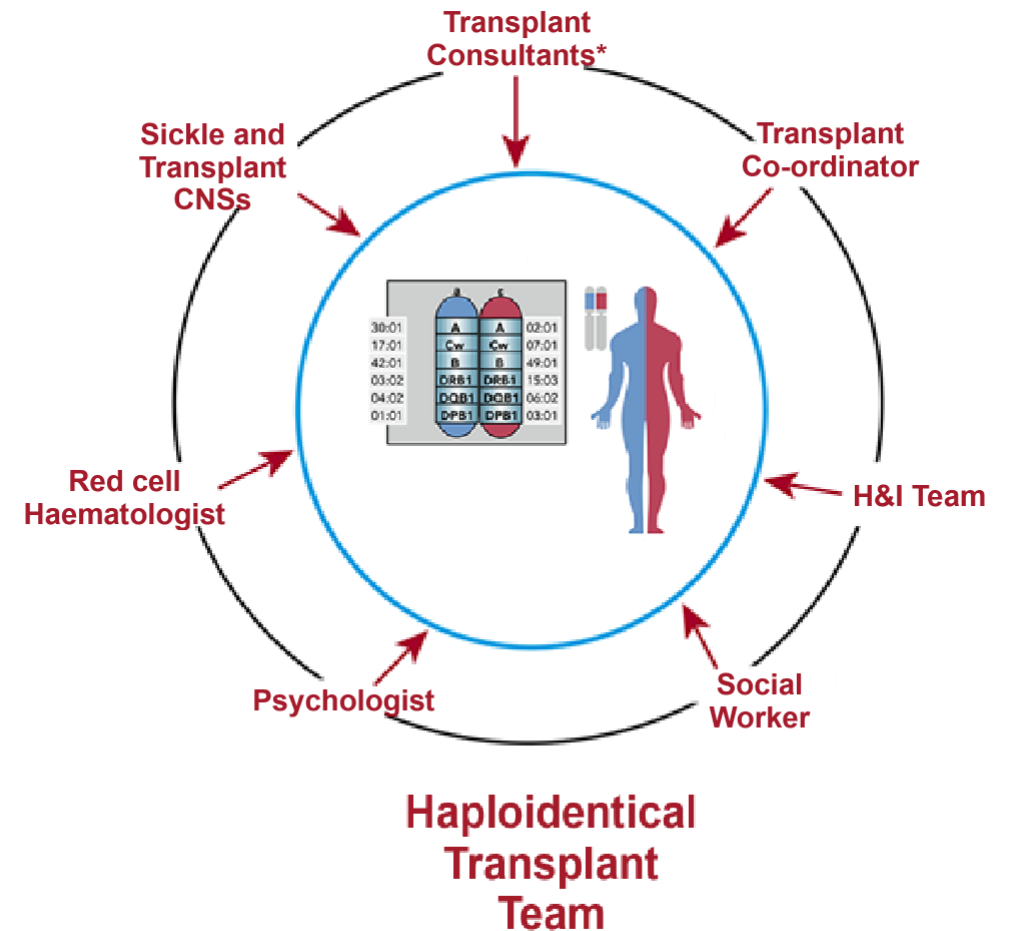
Table: Demographic and clinical characteristics of participants. (n=42)

Variable	Adult (n=42)	Percentage (%)	
Median age (years)	22.8 (15.5-43.2)	N/A	
Transplanted	42	78%	
Follow-up time (days), median (IQR) (n=42)	743.5 (214.0-1393)	N/A	
SCD genotype (SS and Sβ ⁰ -thalassemia), n (%)	47	87%	
TNC dose (10 ⁹ /kg), median IQR (n=37)	3.5 (2.0-5.4)	N/A	
CD34 ⁺ cell dose (10 ⁶ /kg), median IQR (n=41)	3.6 (0.9-7.9)	N/A	
Days post-transplant to neutrophil >500/mcL, median (IQR) (n=42)	25.5 (1.0-197.0)	N/A	
Days post-transplant platelets >50 x 10 ⁹ /L, median (IQR) (n=42)	34.5 (19.0 – 735.0)	N/A	
Primary graft failure, n (%) (n=42)	2	4.8%	
Secondary graft failure, n (%) (n= 42)	1	2.4%	
Death, n (%)	2	4.7%	
Acute graft-versus-host-disease (grades III) (%)	2	4.8%	
Chronic graft-versus-host disease, severe (%)	3	7.1%	
Deaths (n=3)			
Study ID	Age at Transplant (years)	Days post-transplant	Cause of Death
#1	28	Day – 63 (23 days after the start of hydroxyurea therapy, prior to transplant)	Intracranial hemorrhage from a left posterior inferior cerebellar artery aneurysm with evidence of subarachnoid hemorrhage. Progression of ischemic changes involving the left temporoparietal lobes with multifocal bilateral cerebral infarctions and vasospasm
#2	29	261	Sudden death of unclear etiology (after a febrile episode, likely cardio-respiratory failure).
#3	18	291	Acute respiratory distress syndrome



Imperial experience (2023-2024)

- Adult stem cell transplants (207)
 - 32% increase on 2022-2023
 - Haploidentical transplants (22)
- 547 sickle cell patients
- >2000 patients within network
- Paediatric programme in sickle cell
 - >20 years
 - 34-37 transplants/year



Patient case study continued

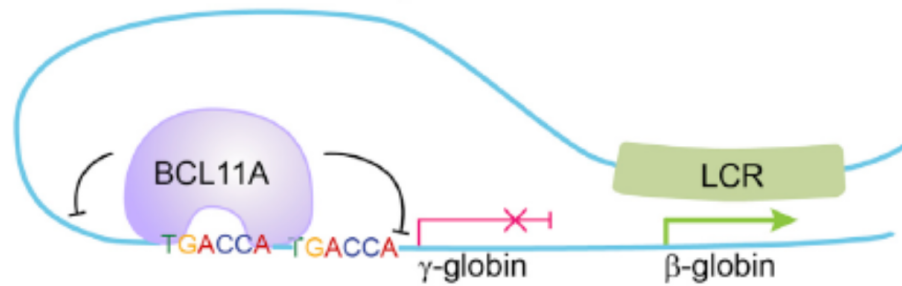
- Fully engrafted by D+26
 - Last sickle pain prior
 - D+130
 - Biliary complications
 - HbS <20%
 - Ongoing psychological support
-

Gene editing

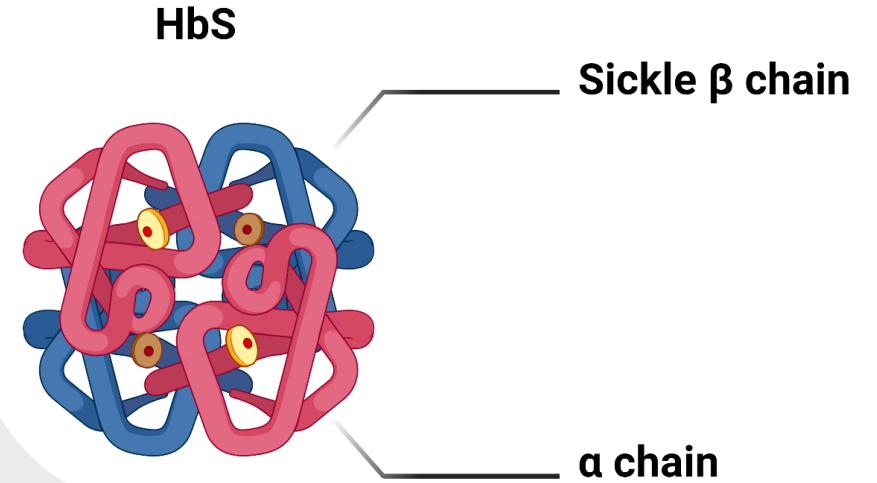
Bcl11a – ‘genetic switch’

Erythroid stem cells

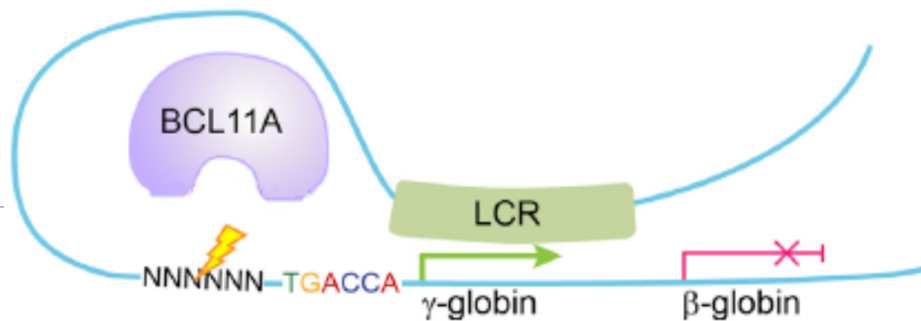
Sickle stem cell



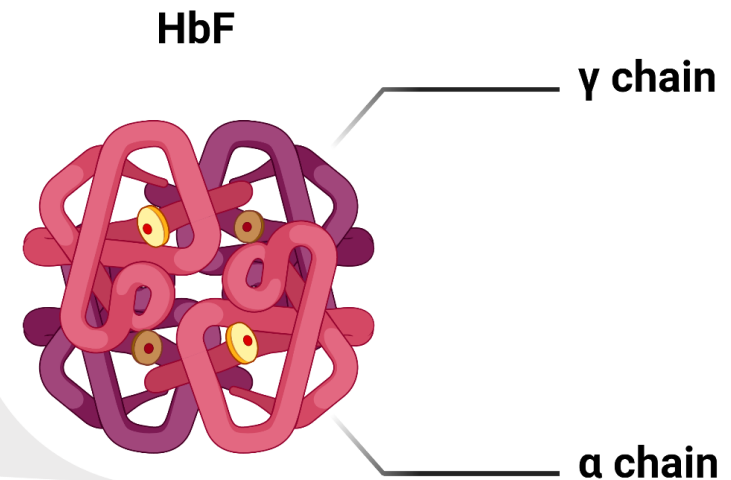
Defective Beta chain expression



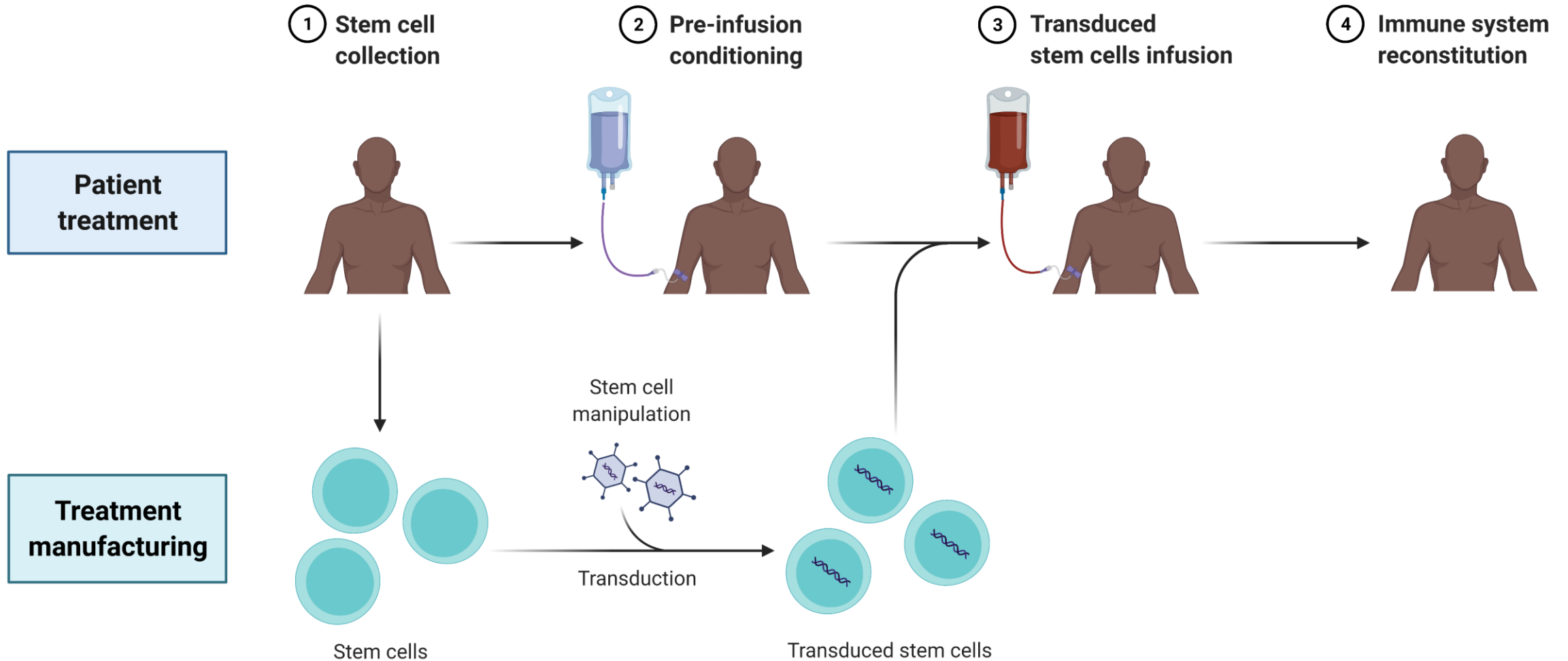
Manipulated stem cell



Gamma chain expression



Gene therapy - editing

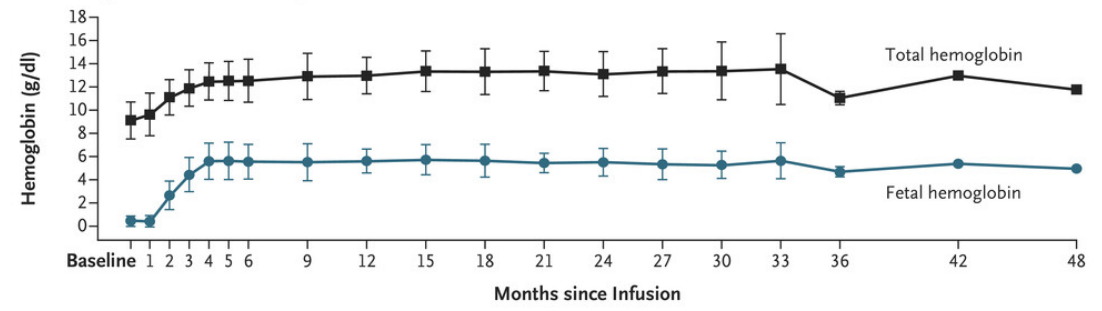


Gene editing for severe SCD

- Both disease due to defective β globin subunit gene
 - Exa-cel (Casgevy) – CRISPR Cas9 product
 - Disrupts Bcl11a enhancer binding site

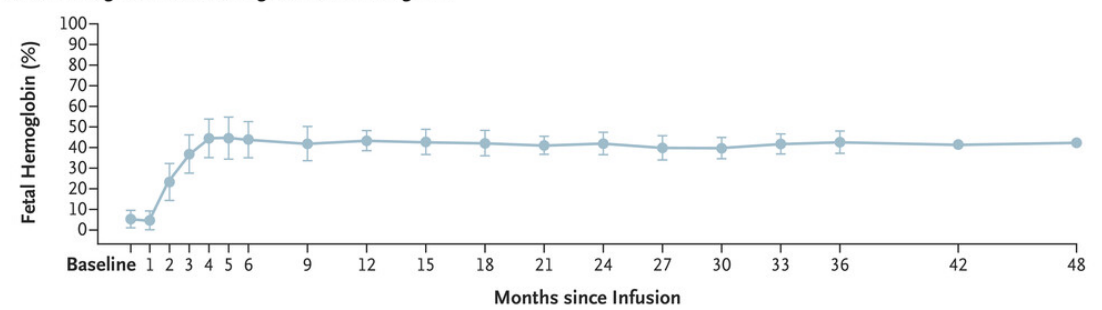
 - Phase 1/2 CLIMB Thal-111 trial
 - Transfusion dependant β -thalassaemia
 - **Phase 1/2 CLIMB Sickle-121 trial**
 - **Severe sickle cell disease**
-

A Mean Total Hemoglobin and Fetal Hemoglobin Levels



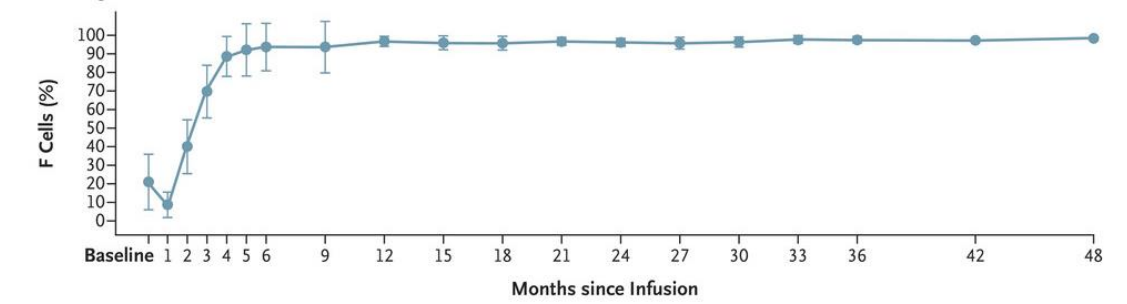
No. of Patients	Baseline	1	2	3	4	5	6	9	12	15	18	21	24	27	30	33	36	42	48
Total hemoglobin	43	42	43	43	41	41	38	34	31	29	27	16	17	10	7	4	2	1	1
Fetal hemoglobin	43	42	43	43	41	40	38	34	31	29	27	16	17	10	7	4	2	1	1

B Mean Fetal Hemoglobin as Percentage of Total Hemoglobin



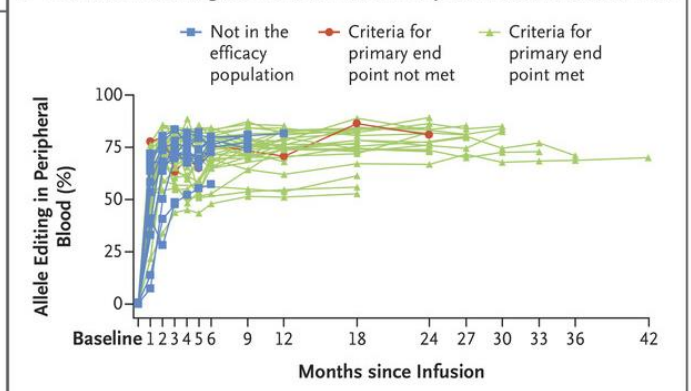
No. of Patients	Baseline	1	2	3	4	5	6	9	12	15	18	21	24	27	30	33	36	42	48
Total hemoglobin	43	42	43	43	41	40	38	34	32	29	27	16	17	10	7	4	2	1	1

C Mean Percentages of F Cells

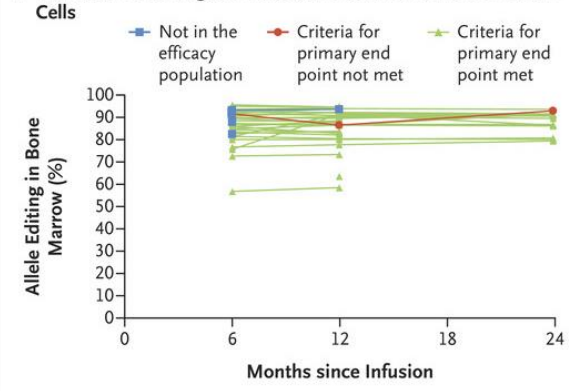


No. of Patients	Baseline	1	2	3	4	5	6	9	12	15	18	21	24	27	30	33	36	42	48
Total hemoglobin	44	43	41	43	41	41	39	34	32	29	27	17	17	10	7	4	2	1	1

D Individual Percentages of Edited Alleles in Peripheral-Blood Nucleated Cells

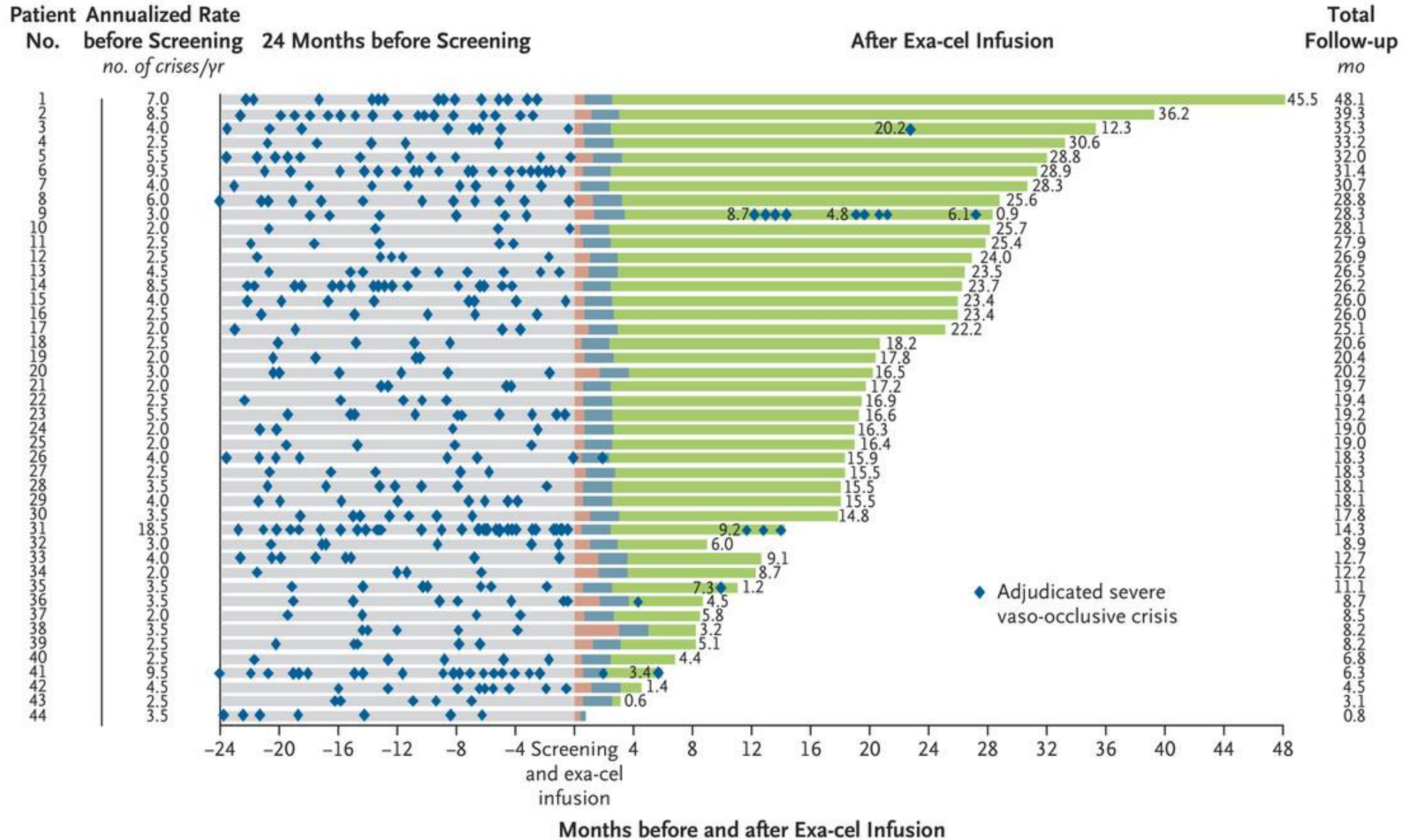


E Individual Percentages of Edited Alleles in Bone Marrow CD34+ Cells



Baseline period
 Time from exa-cel infusion to last red-cell transfusion in the initial period
 60-Day washout period after last red-cell transfusion
 Time from washout period to data cutoff or end of study

A Duration of Periods Free from Severe Vaso-Occlusive Crises after Exa-cel Infusion in All Patients



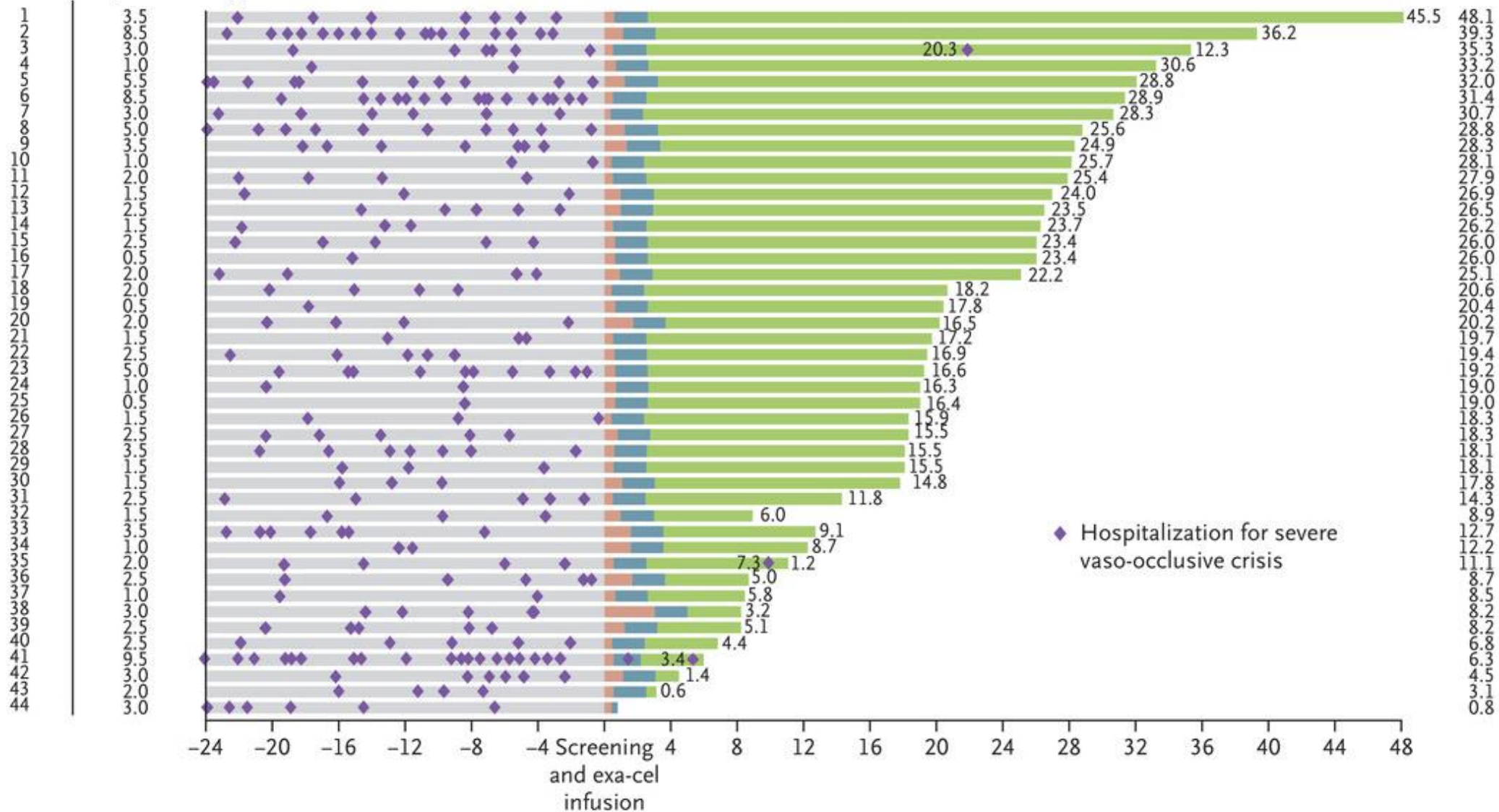
B Duration of Periods Free from Inpatient Hospitalization for Severe Vaso-Occlusive Crises in All Patients

Patient Annualized Rate

No. before Screening 24 Months before Screening
no. of hospitalizations/yr

After Exa-cel Infusion

Total Follow-up
mo



◆ Hospitalization for severe vaso-occlusive crisis

Months before and after Exa-cel Infusion

Patient reported outcome measures in SCD

Visit	EQ VAS (Range: 0-100)	FACT-G Total Score (Range: 0-108)	BMT Score (Range: 0-40)
Baseline mean (SD), points	63.5 (22.5) N=17	67.5 (18.3) N=17	26.1 (3.5) N=17
Change at Month 6, mean (SD), points	+24.3 (27.1) N=16	+16.5 (17.4) N=16	+3.6 (6.2) N=16
Change at Month 12, mean (SD), points	+25.3 (23.2) N=17	+20.5 (18.0) N=17	+5.3 (4.5) N=17
Change at Month 18, mean (SD), points	+33.1 (17.2) N=11	+27.2 (20.3) N=11	+6.7 (4.2) N=11
MCID	7 to 10 points	3 to 7 points	2 to 3 points

Key message

- Sickle cell disease – severe/life limiting disorder
 - Currently limited treatment landscape
 - Fully matched sibling transplant – option for the few
 - Haploidentical transplant is safe and effective options for most
 - Likely to be competing curative options in future
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