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Pediatric Neurology and Neuropathology

The Tulane Sickle Cell Transition Clinic: A Model for Med-Peds Care in New Orleans, LA.

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The Tulane Sickle Cell Transitional Clinic works with patients ages 16-25 who have sickle cell disease to help prepare them for their eventual transition from pediatric to adult care. Patients in this age group are at a higher risk for complications related to their disease and studies have shown a spike in mortality immediately after age 18.¹ By taking a holistic approach to sickle cell care, we believe transition clinics can play a key role in improving long-term outcomes. Preparing patients to take greater responsibility for their care and educating them about their disease helps patients better advocate for themselves when they begin visiting adult clinics, emergency departments, and inpatient wards. In addition, building trust and developing a therapeutic relationship that focuses on the patient's overall well-being helps patients define themselves beyond their disease.

In our experience, using a multidisciplinary team to address patients' physical, mental, and social wellbeing has helped improve adherence to medications, better prepared young adults to advocate for themselves, and educated sickle cell patients about complications that can arise as they get older. Incorporating families into the transition process has also strengthened partnerships between patients and providers.²

Sickle cell transition clinics not only help adolescents and young adults manage their disease but provide them with important social and emotional support. These patients have an elevated risk of morbidity and mortality when they first begin utilizing the adult medical system so transition clinics can play a key role in improving the long-term trajectory for health outcomes.³

Biography

Vinay Krupadev is a third-year Tulane Internal Medicine & Pediatrics resident, Rachel Clarke a third year Tulane hematology-oncology fellow, and Amina Rafique a Tulane and Children's Hospital of New Orleans hematology-oncology attending. They are all based in New Orleans, Louisiana and are passionate about sickle cell transition care. Dr. Rafique completed her pediatric residency at Children's Hospital of University of Illinois and then a fellowship in pediatric hematology-oncology at University of Illinois, Rush Children's Hospital, and Stroger Hospital in Chicago, Illinois. She went on to complete another fellowship in Hematopoietic Stem Cell Transplant at Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh