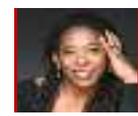




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The Sickle Cell Care, Advocacy, Unity, Support with Empathy Group The Gambian Project



SC Cause Founder Samantha Greaves meets Dr Y'sef

The Sickle Cell Care, Advocacy, Unity, Support with Empathy Group (SC Cause), was created to actively support sickle cell patients and all those affected worldwide.

Our current support extends itself in Europe, USA, Africa as well as the UK.

As part of the Awareness and Support programs of SC Cause this organisation takes seriously the impact the lack of vital knowledge has impacted on those that are unable to access information and hands on support.

Therefore, SC Cause branched out to physically assist the conditions of the Sickle Cell Warrior in Africa, whom are most effected by this lack as a part of our educational, awareness

and charitable prowess. We have begun our works in The Gambia and have been gratefully received and encouraged to return and continue.

How this project begun.

After our initial visit to the Gambia in 2015, members of the management committee were further

convinced that our services should be extended to the sickle cell community in Africa.

We were some-what taken aback by the lack of knowledge, services, equipment and medication afforded to the sickle cell community in the Gambia.

We witnessed this at first hand and although this initial visit was a family holiday, we realised that we would be unable to effectively support the African community

without the unified assistance of SC Cause, therefore we recorded our findings in detail and reported back to our committee upon our return.



1st Gambian Family supported 2015



Conditions in hospitals 2017



School visit 2017



Conditions in hospitals 2017



Visit to Tarranga Radio 2017



Life in the Balance! -- Hospitalised Sickle Baby 2016 --

We have taken a further two self-funded visits to the Gambia, whereas we have conducted our in-depth research and was invited to visit hospitals, schools, orphanages and different villages.

We are well received wherever we go and was also interviewed on Tarranga Radio, the country's main station and are still receiving emails, messages and phone calls for support. From the UK we offer advice via social media, email and personal calls, this support will continue however, we recognised our call for duty in the Gambia and will return to continue with our hands-on support / assistance in October 2018.

The SC Cause Gambian Project Identified Issues (Basic)

Sickle Cell Anaemia, (SCA), is estimated to be one of the biggest causes of premature death in West Africa, mainly attributed to infections.

The prevalence of SCA in The Gambia is unknown, and the lack of prevalence data and the failure of children to be routinely screened either at birth or on hospital admission means that it is likely to be significantly underestimated. In the Gambia the estimated mortality age is 5 years old those that live to teenage or adulthood have a very poor quality of life and would be considered severely disabled had they been living in the western world.

- 80% of people with SCA are born in Africa (<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5266012/>)
- According to the WHO, sickle-cell is particularly prevalent in areas of high malarial transmission.
 - In Africa alone 200,000 infants are born with Sickle Cell Anaemia every year.
 - Annual mortality rate 1.4 per 100.000
 - Average mortality age is 5 years.



Visiting Sickle Cell Clinic 2017
Accessing from the patient's point of view

We set out...

- To identify the needs of our Sickle Cell Warriors in The Gambia.
- To explore the struggles our Gambian warriors face in comparison to our UK warriors.
- To consider solutions; the what, where, when, who and how our offer of support ought to be delivered, we found the issues faced to be extensive and were sadly not surprised that the mortality age was so high.

What we learnt (Basic):

- **Knowledge & Awareness**
 1. There is little to no knowledge of what Sickle Cell Anaemia is even amongst the patients and families.
 2. Even in the most basic of terms; no systems are in place to advise or create awareness of its heredity nature and lifelong implications.
 3. Language barriers are prevalent, there are many local languages throughout the country with Fula, Mandinka, Wallof and Jola being the most common.
 4. Gambian Sign- Language is used by the deaf and rarely understood outside of immediate family.
 5. Not every person especially in the villages, where the poorest and most effected reside; speaks any English.

6. Although most medical staff speak English, they usually only speak one native language, therefore a patient could travel miles to the hospital for treatment to find they cannot be understood.
7. All medication, scans, x-rays, blood tests, transfusions, bandages etc must be paid for at the time.
8. Written prescriptions are rarely purchased at the pharmacy due to costs.

Costs:

➤ **The Patient & Care-Giver**

There is only one main hospital dealing with the sickle cell condition in the Gambia, resources are very basic and old. We saw a lot of very old and broken equipment in the treatment areas and in the grounds.

The patient after being brought to hospital and been diagnosed with suspected Sickle Cell Anaemia will be sent many miles away to be blood tested and / or scanned. They are then sent to another clinic for X-rays before treatment can be given. Each process, treatment and travel are afforded to the patient.

On average a teacher is paid D25 per month; A single shot of morphine is D75 therefore the likely hood of travelling much less obtaining any treatments are highly unlikely.

1. Travel to the Hospital
2. Travelling long distances to a hospital
3. Additional Travelling for scans/ x-rays/ blood testing etc
4. Admission into hospital for up to one week costs the patient a minimum of D2000 in medication alone.



Doctor explains – Patient cannot afford needed medication

Nutrition and Holistic Remedies - can ease the symptoms of Sickle Cell Anaemia.

We at SC Cause promote a healthy diet to assist with the daily lifestyle of the Sickle Cell patient. We have found that changing one's diet to a more plant-based formula and the introduction of holistic remedies to be beneficial with daily pain management, heightened energy levels, increased oxygen flow and clearer breathing.

Since 2016 we have supplied a local farmer from the district of Banjul with seeds, seedlings and funds to grow the types of food beneficial to reducing the symptoms of Sickle Cell Anaemia. The food grown is currently being freely given to the community and will be our source of produce when executing our 'healthy eating and nutritional programs' in the Gambia.



2016 - SC Cause Chairman Curtis Stewart promotes healthy eating in the Gambia

How healthy eating, nutrition & holistic remedies are beneficial to the Sickle Cell Warrior is explained during our monthly Yoga & Chakras Workshops, Massage sessions and our quarterly Healthy Eating and Nutritional Workshops currently taking place in the UK; these workshops are very popular within our group and is also attended by the wider community.

Solutions: SC Cause – THE GAMBIAN PROJECT -

- SC Cause in the Gambia will continue with our ad hoc telephone, email and social media advise communications.
- We will call into Tarranga Radio every month live on air to answer questions and advise to the listeners throughout the country.
- Twice yearly trips to the Gambia to sensitise in every village in the country as from October to host our Sickle Cell Awareness Program, Answer Questions, promote, prepare and teach a healthier diet which is conducive to the sickle cell patient, issue donated medical necessities,

Sensitise = By invitation of the village chief we reside in the village for up to four days. Daily we sit with doctors, medical staff and the villagers with translators from the Gambia.

- Accompanied by the countries leading health counsellors we will visit all hospitals, health centres and clinics; this is encouraged to ensure the health professionals are fully aware of what Sickle Cell is and how to advise and treat individual patients.
- To host fundraising events to include schools, medical centres, religious establishments and community groups to encourage self-help and community inclusion towards the payment & purchase of much needed medical machinery, equipment and services.



Sickle Cell Teacher Training 2017

The Sickle Cell Care, Advocacy, Unity, Support with Empathy Group are happy that our support in the Gambia has been so welcomed, the officials are aware of their obvious lack of knowledge and agree with our detailed synopsis which in turn has assisted them to identify the high volume of infant fatalities and disabilities with the teenage and surviving adult population. Our promise of continued hands-on assistance has been eagerly and gratefully received by the Gambian Health Authorities & Sickle Cell community and in turn we welcome the support of our UK community to continue to fund-raise and volunteer to assist us with this essential out-reach charitable project.



Sensitising is very important to our works, as it enables us to reach as many Sickle Cell warriors as possible. We value the time our Gambian translators and guides have afforded us, it's very empowering the way the Gambians have embraced us and offer every opportunity for us to continue our works is evident that they value us and appreciate our support of the Gambian Sickle Cell Community.

We look forward to welcoming our UK Sickle Cell Warriors & wider community to our compound in 2019 to take part in our Health Empowerment Program, which was the desire of our late Chairman, Mr Curtis Stewart, who sadly passed a few months after our 2016 trip.

The Health Enhancement Program in the Gambia has been renamed; 'The Curtis Stewart Foundation' in his honour.

Please click this link to offer your voluntary services to SC Cause

<http://www.123formbuilder.com/form-2288623/Volunteering-To-SC-Cause-Application-Form>

You may donate using the **Reference: Pro Gambia** to the 'GAMBIAN PROJECT' via:

Healthy Living International

Barclays Bank

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WE THANK YOU KINDLY

