

Sickle-cell anaemia

The Executive Board,

Having examined the report on sickle-cell anaemia,¹

RECOMMENDS to the Fifty-ninth World Health Assembly the adoption of the following resolution:

The Fifty-ninth World Health Assembly,

Recalling resolution WHA57.13 on genomics and world health, and the discussion of the Executive Board at its 116th session on control of genetic diseases which recognized the role of genetic services in improving health globally and in reducing the global health divide;²

Recalling decision Assembly/AU/Dec.81 (V) of the Assembly of the African Union at its Fifth Ordinary Session;

Noting the conclusions of the 4th International African American Symposium on sickle-cell anaemia (Accra, 26-28 July 2000), and the results of the first and second international congresses of the International Organization to Combat Sickle-Cell Anaemia (respectively, Paris, 25-26 January 2002 and Cotonou, 20-23 January 2003);

Concerned at the impact of genetic diseases, and of sickle-cell anaemia in particular, on global mortality and morbidity, especially in developing countries, and by the suffering of patients and families affected by the disease;

Recognizing that the prevalence of sickle-cell anaemia varies between communities, and that insufficiency of relevant epidemiological data may present a challenge to effective and equitable management;

Deeply concerned at the absence of official recognition of sickle-cell anaemia as a priority in public health;

¹ Document EB117/34.

² See document EB116/2005/REC/1, Summary record of the first meeting, section 4.

Recognizing the current inequality of access to safe and appropriate genetic services throughout the world;

Recognizing that effective programmes for sickle-cell anaemia must be sensitive to cultural practices, and appropriate for the given social context;

Recognizing that the management of sickle-cell anaemia raises specific ethical, legal and social issues that require appropriate consideration,

1. URGES Member States:

- (1) to develop, implement and reinforce in a systematic, equitable and effective manner, comprehensive national, integrated programmes for the prevention and management of sickle-cell anaemia, including surveillance, dissemination of information, awareness-raising, and screening, such programmes being tailored to specific socioeconomic and cultural contexts and aimed at reducing the incidence, morbidity and mortality associated with this genetic disease;
- (2) to develop their capacity to evaluate the situation regarding sickle-cell anaemia and the impact of national programmes;
- (3) to intensify the training of all health professionals in high-prevalence areas;
- (4) to develop and strengthen medical genetics services, within existing primary health care systems, in partnership with parent/patient organizations;
- (5) to promote community education, including health counselling, and associated ethical, legal and social issues;
- (6) to promote effective international cooperation in combating sickle-cell anaemia;
- (7) in collaboration with international organizations, to support basic and applied research on sickle-cell anaemia;

2. REQUESTS the Director-General:

- (1) to increase awareness of the international community of the global burden of sickle-cell anaemia, including as part of a World Health Day, and to promote equitable access to health services for prevention and management of the disease;
- (2) to provide technical support and advice to national programmes of Member States through the framing of policies and strategies for prevention and management of sickle-cell anaemia;
- (3) to promote and support intercountry collaboration in order to expand the training and expertise of personnel and to support the further transfer of advanced technologies and expertise to developing countries;

(4) to continue WHO's normative functions in drafting guidelines on prevention and management of sickle-cell anaemia with a view to elaborating regional plans and fostering the establishment of regional groups of experts;

(5) to promote, support and coordinate needed research on sickle-cell disorders in order to improve the duration and quality of life of those affected by such disorders.

Fifth meeting, 25 January 2006
EB117/SR/5

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