Sickle Cell Anemia Essay, Research Paper

What is It? How can I get It? How do I know if I have It? Can I get It from my boyfriend? If I do have It, how can I treat It? Questions, after questions, all pertaining to one subject, sickle cell anemia, a disease that has affected the lives and homes of many people. Not knowing all you can know about this disease is the 5% added to your chances of recieving it.

WHAT IS IT?

Sickle cell anemia is an inherited blood disease which can cause bouts of pain, damage vital organs or even cause death in early childhood years. It occurs when a person inherits two sickle cell genes or a combonation of a sickle cell gene plus any one of many abnormal genes.

Hemoglobin is responsible for carring oxygen from the lungs to the rest of the body. The change that occurs in the oxygen flow causes sickle cell symptoms. In a person with sickle cell during the release of oxygen from the red blood cells, the cell becomes distorted. The cells form a rigid banana or sickle shape which can clog blood vessels.

The sickle cells tend to become trapped and then destroyed in the liver or spleen. A shortage of red blood cells can cause anemia.

WHAT CAN IT DO?

The symptoms of sickle cell anemia are paleness, shortness of breath, fatigue, infections that speed up the destruction of the red blood cells. Other symptoms include, fast or troubled breathing, frequent coughs, screams when touched, weakness, vomiting, and diarrhea.

There are two common types of sickle cellanemia (SS disease) or sickle “C” disease. A less common form known as Sickle Beta Thalassemia. The affects of the disease can be greatly seen or never seen.

THE CAUSE OF PAIN

The cause of pain is when the cells become “stuck” in the blood vessals. When the cells get stuck, they cause cell pile-up and block blood from getting to the tissue. This is called a “Crisis”. The crisis can be so severe that it might need to be treated in a hospital. Though it can be minor enough as tub treated at home.

THE CHANCES OF GETTING THE DISEASE

In the United States, siclke cell is most common among blacks and hispanics of caribbean ancestry. It also widely affects people of Arabian, Greek, Maltese, Italian, Sardinian, Turkish and Southern Asian Ancestry.

A child being born a carrier to a couple who both carry a sickle cell gene is a 50% chance, 25% that he/she will get the disease and 25% that he/she will not get the trait or disease.

TEST TREATMENT CURE-IS THERE ONE?

Hemoglobin Electrophoresis is the test that can detect the sickle cell trait ot desease in the blood. This test as well can be used to find any other blood abnormalities in the body. There is also a prenatal test to see if the baby will have the disease, carry the trait or be unaffected.

Right now, there is no cure for sickle cell but there are many ideas that can lead to a cure someday. There are no drugs that can prevent the “crisis” but there are therapies that can reduce the severity and the frequency of the crisis. There are also treatments to help limit the damage done by a sickle cell to an organ.

Sickle cell is a disease that could at one time affect you. The chances may be slim but there is always a chance for anything. With groups like the March of Dimes, people can be supported in their struggle against sickle cell. As of right now, researchers are trying to understand and improve the treatment of this birth defect. You should always feel free to ask any questions about sickle cell and how it might affect you or your family. To be inquisitive might just save you or one of your loved ones someday.

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