Interview Questions: How intimate partner relationships influence health outcomes among individuals living with Sickle Cell Disease

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This field observation report examines the social and relational dynamics experienced by individuals living with Sickle Cell Disease (SCD)

Introduction

This interview guide is designed to explore how intimate partner relationships influence health outcomes among individuals living with sickle cell disease (SCD). Research highlights the importance of social support, relationship quality, and communication in shaping chronic illness management and overall well-being (Bediako & Moffitt, 2011; Crosby et al., 2015). Intimate partners can play a critical role in emotional support, care coordination, and health decision-making, yet relationship stress may also negatively affect health outcomes. This interview seeks to better understand these dynamics through participants lived experiences.

The interview is expected to last approximately 20–30 minutes and includes open-ended questions to encourage in-depth responses.

Opening Script

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this interview. The purpose of this conversation is to understand how intimate partner relationships may influence your health and well-being while living with sickle cell disease. There are no right or wrong answers your experiences and perspectives are what matter most. Your responses will remain confidential.

With your permission, I would like to begin.

Section 1: Background and Relationship Context

1. Can you tell me a little about yourself and your experience living with sickle cell disease?

Prompt 1. How would you describe your current or most recent intimate relationship?

Prompt 2. In what ways, if any, has your relationship been shaped by your experience with sickle cell disease?

Section 2: Partner Support and Health Management

1. How does your partner support you in managing your sickle cell disease?

Prompt 1. Can you describe specific ways your partner is involved during pain crises or medical situations?

Prompt 2. What types of support from your partner have been most helpful for your health?

Prompt 3. Are there times when you feel your partner does not fully understand your condition? Please explain.

Section 3: Communication and Relationship Dynamics

1. How do you and your partner communicate about your health and needs?

Prompt 1. What makes it easier or more difficult to talk about your condition with your partner?

Prompt 2. Can you describe a time when communication with your partner impacted your health, either positively or negatively?

Section 4: Emotional and Mental Health

1. How has your relationship affected your emotional or mental well-being?

Prompt 1. In what ways does stress within your relationship impact your physical health or pain experiences?

Prompt 2. How do you and your partner navigate emotional challenges related to sickle cell disease?

Section 5: Barriers and Challenges

1. What challenges have you experienced in your relationship related to your illness?

Prompt 1. How do issues such as trust, independence, or caregiving roles show up in your relationship?

Prompt 2. Have you ever felt misunderstood, unsupported, or stigmatized by a partner because of your condition?

Section 6: Healthcare and Partner Involvement

1. How involved is your partner in your healthcare appointments or decision-making?

Prompt 1. What role do you believe partners should play in managing sickle cell disease?

Prompt 2. Have healthcare providers ever included your partner in discussions about your care? Please describe your experience.

Section 7: Recommendations and Closing

1. What advice would you give to individuals with sickle cell disease about navigating intimate relationships?

Prompt 1. What advice would you give to partners of individuals living with sickle cell disease?

Prompt 2. What changes would you like to see in how healthcare systems support couples managing sickle cell disease?

Prompt 3. Is there anything else you would like to share about your relationship and health?

Closing Statement

Thank you for sharing your experiences. Your insights are valuable and will contribute to a better understanding of how relationships impact health outcomes for individuals living with sickle cell disease.

References

Bediako, S. M., & Moffitt, K. R. (2011). Race and social attitudes about sickle cell disease. *Genetic Medicine, 13*(7), 617–623. https://doi.org/10.1097/GIM.0b013e318214bb0e.

Crosby, L. E., Joffe, N. E., Peugh, J., Ware, R. E., & Britto, M. T. (2015). Pilot of the chronic disease self-management program for adolescents and young adults with sickle cell disease. *Journal of Adolescent Health, 56*(6), 643–648. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jadohealth.2015.02.003.