



## ***Story of Hope: Sickle Cell Disorder can be cured***

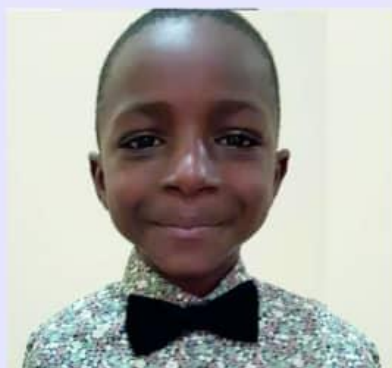
**A testimony from one of the members parent as his child Ahmad was cure from SCD through Bone marrow transplant – *Abdulkadir Garba Gusau***

The bone marrow transplant remains the only permanent cure for SCD so far, all other medications are for management of the disease.

My son Ahmad had his transplant in December 2016 in Delhi, India (BLK Super Specialty Hospital) when he was 4 years old. His sibling who was 2 years old then, was the donor and was 100% match. It involves determination, patience and endurance. The first step is the Hla typing to get a match, although these days even a 50% match works and stem cord blood could also be used.

Once that is done and all the necessary lab tests conducted, the patient is now admitted into the bone marrow transplant special ward. After signing all the relevant forms the two lines are inserted, in the two veins on the chest for chemotherapy to start immediately. The chemo involves the administration of different drugs through the lines which is not really painful. The chemo is done to remove his existing bone marrow completely from the system by reducing it to something like 0.01. At that point your immunity will be completely down, so to avoid infections all the necessary precautions are done. The chemo takes about 11 days.

Once tests show that they have lowered your bone marrow to as low as possible, then the donor comes in, his cells are taking under anesthesia. A procedure of about 30 minutes and he is off, the cells are taking to the lab, the required cells incubated and the bone marrow is ready for transplant. The transplant is just



**Ahmad Abdulkadir Garba Gusau**

like blood transfusion takes only 30 minutes. After the procedure, it can engraft in a couple of days.

Once it engrafted, chimerism test is done to see the amount of donor cells in your blood, my son's chimerism was 99% which was good. If no issue after the bone marrow transplant, you will be discharged from the hospital as outpatient. You will visit your doctor thrice a week for consultations and tests especially on the level of cyclosporine in your body. If no Graft vs Host Disease (GVHD) you will then be discharged. GVHD can occur at any given time but can be cured if detected early. There is chronic and acute and both in various stages. My son had acute GVHD of the gut stage 4. He was re-admitted and Alhamdulillah he made it. He is perfectly healthy now, this is getting to 2 years after the procedure and the doctors have given him a clean bill of health. The cost varies, if no complication, the procedure will not be more than 30,000 U.S Dollar.