

Review report

Final title: [First global guideline of the World Health Organization on pregnancy care in sickle cell disease: Balancing maternal equity and ethical accountability](#)

Title at submission: Maternal equity and ethical accountability: WHO's first guideline on pregnancy care for women with sickle cell disease



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Reviewer F: Rajan Talukder, ORCID: 0000-0001-6325-2617

1. Comment This is a solid commentary on a highly relevant global health topic. The requested revisions are minor and primarily concern structural formatting and a slight increase in critical depth. The manuscript is suitable for publication post-revision. The authors have appropriately declared no conflicts of interest.

This commentary addresses a timely and significant WHO guideline. It remains primarily descriptive. To meet the standards of a scholarly publication, the authors can provide critical analysis beyond summary, such as contrasting new hydroxycarbamide recommendations with previous contraindications to substantiate the "paradigm shift" claim.

Response We thank the reviewer for the assessment and potential significance of the comment.

Reviewer H: Hridi Hedayet, ORCID: 0000-0002-7708-0614

Overview

This commentary provides a timely and well-structured synthesis of the World Health Organization's first global guideline on pregnancy care for women with sickle cell disease (SCD). It highlights both clinical and ethical imperatives, situating the guideline within a broader maternal health and equity framework. The manuscript is concise, clear, and well-supported with up-to-date references. The integration of ethical accountability alongside technical recommendations strengthens its originality and relevance. With minor refinements in clarity and organization, this work will serve as an important resource for both researchers and practitioners.

2. Comment Appropriateness of the Title

The title is relevant and accurately reflects the manuscript's focus. However, could consider simplifying for impact (e.g., "WHO's first global guideline on pregnancy care in sickle cell disease: balancing maternal equity and ethical accountability").

Response Revised to: "WHO's first global guideline on pregnancy care in sickle cell disease: balancing maternal equity and ethical accountability." (Title page)

3. Comment Completeness and accuracy of the Abstract

Balance between clinical and ethical aspects could be included, additionally if a brief mention of implementation challenges in LMICs are included, could enrich the abstract.

Response The Abstract has been revised.

4. Comment Clarity and appropriateness of the Objective(s)

The objectives are implied but not explicitly stated. Suggest adding a sentence in the Introduction clarifying the manuscript's dual focus: (i) summarizing key clinical recommendations, and (ii) analyzing their ethical and equity implications.

Response As this is a commentary, formal objectives are not separately stated.

5. Comment Clarity of the rationale for conducting the study is given in the Introduction section

Briefly referencing why earlier WHO maternal health frameworks did not adequately address this population could enrich the content.

Response The clarity is given in the Introduction section.

6. Comment The Methods are described in sufficient details so that the study can be reproduced. Whether ethical concerns have been well described

Response Introduction clarified that this work is a narrative commentary.

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Not applicable

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7. **Comment** **Clarity and appropriateness of the Design to achieve the objective(s)**
Can explicitly mention the approach (e.g., synthesis of WHO guideline with ethical analysis).

Response The objective has been revised accordingly.

8. **Comment** **Quality, clarity and appropriateness of the Table(s)**
Table 1 is quite dense. Can reduce text in the second and third columns by using concise bullet points.

Response Table 1 revised with concise bullet points for clarity and readability.

9. **Comment** **Pertinence of the Discussion section whether it justify the main message of the manuscript without repeating the results**
The discussion effectively situates the guideline within global health and equity discourse. However, it occasionally repeats results (e.g., hydroxyurea recommendations). Condense to focus on implications and gaps.

Response The redundancy is removed.

10. **Comment** **Whether Strength(s) and Limitation(s) are well described**
Strengths (timeliness, dual framing of ethics and science) are implicit but not labeled. Recommend adding a short subsection explicitly outlining strengths and limitations of the commentary.

Response New subsection "Strengths and Limitations" added before Conclusion. (Page X, Lines Y-Z)

Responsible Editor: **M Mostafa Zaman**, ORCID: [0000-0002-1736-1342](https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1736-1342)

11. **Comment** **Key Messages alignment**
Revise to align with problem statement and conclusion.

Response **Key Messages revised to**
"The WHO's first global guideline on sickle cell disease in pregnancy provides both clinical clarity and ethical accountability, offering a pathway toward safe, equitable, and dignified maternal care, especially in resource-limited settings."

12. **Comment** **Clarity and conciseness**
Make comments clearer and succinct.

Response The manuscript has been revised for the clarity and brevity.