

Response to the Reviewers

Dear Editor,

We sincerely thank the Editor and Reviewers for their careful, thoughtful, and constructive evaluation of our manuscript entitled “A Qualitative Review of Psychosocial Challenges of Adults Living with Sickle Cell Disease.” We are grateful for the recognition of the manuscript’s topical importance, interdisciplinary relevance, and strong engagement with the literature.

We have carefully considered all reviewer comments and have undertaken substantial revisions to improve methodological clarity, reduce redundancy, sharpen focus, and enhance structural and editorial coherence. Below, we provide a detailed, point-by-point response to each reviewer’s comments, with corresponding revisions clearly identified in the manuscript.

Reviewer 1

Overall Comment

We appreciate Reviewer 1’s thoughtful assessment of the manuscript’s importance, scope, and conceptual contribution. We agree that focused revisions were necessary and have addressed all concerns in full, as detailed below.

Major Strengths

1. Topical Importance and Relevance

Comment: Mental health in adult SCD populations is critically understudied, and the integration of stigma, systemic racism, and social determinants strengthens the manuscript.

Response:

We thank the reviewer for this affirmation. No revisions were required.

2. Comprehensive Scope

Comment: The synthesis of depression, anxiety, substance use, cognitive impairment, health system barriers, and emerging interventions is timely and relevant.

Response:

We appreciate this feedback. No revisions were required.

3. Practice and Policy Implications

Comment: The manuscript offers clear and actionable recommendations with a strong emphasis on culturally responsive care.

Response:

Thank you for this observation. No revisions were required.

4. Balanced Perspective

Comment: The manuscript appropriately highlights resilience and protective factors.

Response:

We appreciate this feedback. No revisions were required.

Major Concerns (Requiring Revision)

1. Narrative Review Methodology Needs Clarification

Comment: The manuscript includes elements resembling a systematic review without sufficient rigor and transparency.

Response:

We agree and have revised the manuscript to clearly and consistently position it as a non-systematic qualitative narrative review. Specifically:

The Methods section was simplified and tightened.

Language implying systematic or PRISMA-level rigor was removed.

Database searching is now described as informative and exploratory.

The synthesis approach is explicitly described as a qualitative thematic narrative synthesis.

Amendments made in: Methods (Search Strategy and Synthesis)

2. Substantial Redundancy Across Sections

Comment: Overlap exists across the Literature Review, Results, and Discussion, and several thematic sections.

Response:

We agree and conducted a major structural consolidation to reduce redundancy and improve narrative flow:

Repeated prevalence statistics and conceptual arguments were removed.

Overlapping discussions of stigma, pain, and transition to adult care were consolidated.

Literature Review content was integrated into a unified Results and Discussion section.

Amendments made in: Results and Discussion; Psychosocial Stressors; Social Determinants of Health; Health System Barriers

3. Overextension Beyond the Scope of a Narrative Review

Comment: The manuscript occasionally reads as a policy paper or clinical guideline.

Response:

We agree and clarified the primary aim as the synthesis of psychosocial and mental health challenges. In response:

Detailed intervention descriptions were condensed.

Policy and practice content was repositioned as implications rather than prescriptive guidance.

The Emerging Interventions section was shortened and refocused.

Amendments made in: Emerging Interventions; Discussion; Implications

4. Structural and Editorial Issues

Comment: Inconsistent section numbering, grammatical issues, and citation inconsistencies were noted.

Response:

These concerns were fully addressed through a comprehensive editorial review:

Section numbering is now consistent throughout.

Grammar, punctuation, spacing, and formatting errors were corrected.

References were reviewed for citation consistency.

¶ Amendments made in: Entire manuscript

5. Limited Global Representation

Comment: The manuscript relies heavily on U.S.-based studies despite global framing.

Response:

We agree and addressed this limitation by:

Narrowing claims to accurately reflect the predominantly high-income evidence base.

Strengthening the Limitations section to explicitly acknowledge gaps in global representation.

¶ Amendments made in: Introduction; Discussion; Limitations

Minor Comments

Clarification of Cognitive Impairment Focus

Response: Cognitive impairment is now clearly framed as a secondary but relevant consideration.

Amendment made in: Results and Discussion

Conceptual Framework

Response: A concise biopsychosocial framework was added to anchor the narrative synthesis.

Amendments made in: Introduction; Discussion

Length of Emerging Interventions Section

Response: This section was shortened and refocused.

Amendment made in: Emerging Interventions

Reviewer 2

We sincerely thank Reviewer 2 for their thoughtful and constructive feedback and for recognizing the manuscript's interdisciplinary relevance.

Title Revision

Comment: Clarify that the focus is broader than mental health.

Response:

We agree and revised the title to reflect the biopsychosocial scope.

Revised title:

“A Qualitative Review of Psychosocial Challenges of Adults Living with Sickle Cell Disease.”

Use of “Mental Health” Terminology

Comment: Recommend broader biopsychosocial language.

Response:

We strongly agree. Terminology was revised throughout the manuscript to reflect psychosocial and biopsychosocial framing.

Amendments made in: Title; Abstract; Introduction; Section headings; Discussion

Editorial and Formatting Issues

Comments: Minor wording inconsistencies and section numbering issues.

Response:

All identified issues were corrected.

Amendments made in: Introduction, Results, and Discussion

Social Determinants of Health Section

Comment: Strengthen the linkage between unmet social needs and disease burden in African American and Black populations.

Response:

The section was revised to explicitly connect unmet social needs, structural inequities, and disproportionate disease burden.

Amendment made in: Social Determinants of Health

Reviewer 3

We thank Reviewer 3 for their positive feedback on the manuscript's clarity, accessibility, and interdisciplinary relevance.

Alternative Title Suggestion

Response: We did not adopt a mental health-exclusive title, as the manuscript addresses broader psychosocial dimensions. The revised title reflects this scope.

Formatting and Spacing Issues

Response: All spacing and formatting issues were corrected following a full editorial review.

Amendments made in: Entire manuscript

Conclusion

We appreciate the reviewers' constructive feedback, which substantially strengthened the manuscript. All major and minor concerns have been addressed, resulting in improved clarity, coherence, methodological transparency, and balance. We believe the revised manuscript now meets the journal's standards for rigor and relevance and is well-positioned for publication.

Thank you for your time and consideration.