

## **A FIRST FOR INDIA: UNRELATED CORD BLOOD TRANSPLANT TREATS SICKLE CELL DISEASE**

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Anita Maeba from River state in Nigeria cannot express her happiness. She eagerly asks over the phone if she can send pictures of her two sons on 'whatsapp' as they have got a new lease of life after suffering the debilitating sickle cell disease.

"I am so so happy," Maeba told The Indian Express as she recalled how Nuka, 7, and Kaana, 4, suffered extreme pain in the joints and back and became breathless. "For eight months now they are symptom-free. What else can a mother want?" she asks.

A death in her family caused by the sickle cell disease drove home the pain of the disease that kills nearly one lakh infants in Nigeria every year.

Nearly two years ago, Anita too realised that both her sons had the same disease and treatment could only provide respite for a couple of days before the shooting pain returned.

"Doctors over here referred us to get treatment in India as it was cheaper than USA and UK," Maeba said. "We searched the Internet and several recommended us to Pune."

The family sought treatment from Dr Vijay Ramanan, haematologist at Ruby Hall Clinic, who said that it was for the first time that two unrelated cord blood transplants from Indian donors were performed to treat the disease.

Ramanan said that patients with sickle cell disease can benefit from cord blood transplants.

Maeba said, "My older son Nuka is eating well and playing happily. Kaana is slowly picking up. Yes, we do have a bright future ahead," she exclaimed.

**Reference:** <http://archive.indianexpress.com/news/a-first-for-india-unrelated-cord-blood-transplant-treats-sickle-cell-disease/1137450/>