Scenario 4: Sickle Cell

1) What is the relationship between fluid and oxygen therapy in the treatment of sickle cell anemia? Adequate hydration is very important in reducing the chance of a crisis. Oxygen therapy may also prevent the vaso-occlusion.

2) What complications might Brittany Long face if her symptoms are not recognized and treated in a timely manner? If untreated sickle cell can cause things such as, Stroke, acute chest syndrome, Pulmonary hypertension, and organ damage.

3) Document the patient teaching that you would provide for Brittany Long and her family before discharge, including disease process, nutrition, signs and symptoms of crises, prevention of infection and dehydration, and pain management. Sickle Cell disease causes your red blood cells to become 'sickled" which causes them to stick together and block blood flow to body tissues. It is important to avoid triggers which cause hypoxia like dehydration or strenuous exercise. A healthy diet is very important including, fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and proteins. Get plenty of calcium-rich foods and beverages such as milk, yogurt, and cheese. Be aware of signs and symptoms of crisis such as anemia symptoms, swelling, and intense pain. It is important to prevent infections by avoiding contact with people with known illness and always wash your hands. Staying hydrated by drinking plenty of fluids will also help prevent a crisis. When pain crisis does occur it is important to take need pain medications on a regular basis until the crisis is resolved.

4) Reflecting on Brittany Long's case, were there any actions you would do differently? If so, what were these actions, and why would you do them differently? While completing the SIM I conducted my Pain Assessment last, thinking back, I should have done this first and administered her pain medication before proceeding with all the other assessments so that her pain could be addressed sooner.

5) Describe how you would apply the knowledge and skills that you obtained in Brittany Long's case to an actual patient care situation. This SIM reminded me of the importance of listening to your patient and understating that pain is not always visible on the outside. I will also remember to address my patients pain first whenever possible.