MSF: Treating patients with Chagas disease and our Campaign

Gemma Ortiz Genovese, Senior Advocacy and Liaison Officer
Medecins Sans Frontieres

- Humanitarian medical NGO, founded in 1971 by a group of French doctors
- Total independence
- Medical assistance to populations in need
- Won the Nobel Peace Prize 10 years ago
- Founded, and funder of Drugs for Neglected Disease initiative (DNDi)
MSF and Chagas Disease

• 10 years of diagnosing and treating patients with Chagas in Nicaragua, Honduras, Guatemala and Bolivia
• Field research
• Advocacy actions –
• Why?
Chagas Disease

• 100 million people are at risk of infection in Latin America.

• *T. Cruzi* infects an estimated 10-15 million people.

• 15,000 deaths each year.
In 100 years time, will people still remember Chagas disease??
Estimated global population infected by *Trypanosoma cruzi*, 2009

Sources:
## MSF and Chagas: Evolution

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<td>Honduras</td>
<td>Under 5’s Rural 232 treated (0.9%)</td>
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<td>Entre Rios - Bolivia</td>
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<td>Under 15’s Rural 1450 treated (19.4%)</td>
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<td>Nicaragua</td>
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<td>Under 15’s Rural</td>
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<td>Guatemala</td>
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<td>Under 14’s Rural 124 treated (1.4%)</td>
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<td>Sucre - Bolivia</td>
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<td>Under 18’s Peri-urban 1100 treated (5.9%) Rapid test</td>
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<td>Cochabamba - Bolivia</td>
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<td>Under 50’s Urban and Peri-urban 600 treated to date</td>
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MSF Analysis: Problem tree

Population with high sero-prevalence of Chagas

- Vector Transmission
- Limited access to dx and tx
- Vertical transmission
- Transmission transfusions

- Socio-economic Impact
  - Mortality
  - Morbidity

Population with limited resources

Lack of political /economic interest

Disease of the poor
MSF activities

Population with high sero-prevalence of Chagas

Vector Transmission
Limited access to dx and tx
Vertical transmission
Transmission transfusions

Population with limited resources
Lack of political/economic interest
Disease of the poor

Socio-economic Impact
Mortality
Morbidity

Population with limited resources
Lack of political/economic interest
Disease of the poor
Chagas in Bolivia

- 60% of the country is endemic
- Population at risk: 4,000,000
- Population infected: >1 million
- Causes 15% of adult deaths

In Cochabamba, 16% prevalence
Side Effects
Impact of the projects?

- Prevention and Treatment
- Protocols
- Retained trained staff
- Publications
- In 5 health centres
  - 50% non-MSF staff are ‘involved’
  - 90% of treatment contacts by non-MSF doctors
  - 50% of screening done by non-MSF nurses
  - 30% of diagnosis done by non-MSF lab staff

- In Entre Rios:
  - Less than 100 children diagnosed and treated in 3 years since project closure

- In Sucre:
  - 1040 of 1080 children diagnosed before MSF departure remain untreated.

- In Bolivia:
  - >99% of adult need unmet
  - 95% of children need unmet
‘...every study, every experience, points a finger
towards a ...population which lives in extreme
poverty, and produces irritation in their
governments, being testament to their
incapacity to resolve huge economic and social
problems.’

Carlos Chagas
The time has come to act!

- In its ten years of experience in the field, **MSF** has proved that the diagnosis and treatment of Chagas disease, even in remote rural environments, is viable, necessary and ethically beyond question.
Fight on all fronts against Chagas disease:

- Diagnosis of the sick at the primary care level.
- Treatment for children and, wherever possible, for adults, in the primary care system.
- Determining the prevalence of Chagas.
- Reinforcing the supply chains.
- Vector control activities.
R&D Needs

• Better diagnostic tests
• More effective and less toxic treatments
• Test of cure
• Better prevention strategies
• Alternative sources of R&D funding for Chagas disease
What MSF identifies as the immediate needs

• **Affordable** and **Accessible** diagnostic tools and drugs

• **Secured production** of current treatments and distribution of quality essential medicines and diagnosis tools

• **Policy change** (PAHO 2009, WHA 2010)

• **Integration** of diagnosis and treatment into primary health care and national health services

• **R&D** diagnostic tools and new drugs
Join the campaign!

www.chagas-rompe-el-silencio.com
www.chagas-break-the-silence.com
Thank You