



SEMANA CHAGAS ENFERMEDAD DESATENDIDA

15 - 19 de abril 2013 COCHABAMBA | BOLIVIA

Specialists from around the world have gathered in Cochabamba, Bolivia to discuss projects to improve the health and quality of life of those affected by Chagas disease

- The event takes place in the medical school of the Universidad Mayor de San Simón in Cochabamba, Bolivia, with the participation of national authorities and experts from around the world.
- A preview of the documentary film "Chagas: A Silent Killer", by Argentinean director Ricardo Prevé, to be released this week as one of the highlights of the meeting (full film: <http://aje.me/11mBF7A>). The film has the support of soccer player Lionel Messi, who recorded a video message calling stakeholders to unite to address the problem of Chagas (<http://youtu.be/AI7zfgXgvSk>).
- Bolivia is estimated to have over one million infected by Chagas, and in Latin America the number exceeds 7 million. Chagas disease was once entirely confined to the Americas – principally Latin America – but it has now spread to other continents.

(Cochabamba, Bolivia, April 16th, 2013) "Chagas Week: Neglected Disease" gathers doctors, specialists, researchers and authorities to discuss issues related to the disease that affects up to 8 million people worldwide, mostly in Latin America, according to the World Health Organization.

"Chagas disease in Bolivia is not only forgotten but also unseen, since it lives hidden in our bodies. However, efforts as a country has generated results – the infestation rate of the vector - kissing bugs- went from 70% to 3%. There is still a lot to do: 172,581 people were examined, 35,154 positive cases were detected, and 3,983 persons were treated. The prevalence rate is 20.4%," said the Minister of Health of Bolivia, Dr Juan Carlos Calvimontes, at the opening ceremony of the event in Cochabamba, Bolivia, taking place throughout the week until Friday.

"It is very important that this meeting takes place at this university because it should be part of health policies. The university is the cradle of knowledge and resources important for preventing and curing the disease," said the minister in front of an auditorium full of experts from all around the world who convened to tackle possible solutions for this disease.

A preview of the documentary film "Chagas: A Silent Killer", directed by Argentinean filmmaker





SEMANA CHAGAS ENFERMEDAD DESATENDIDA

15 - 19 de abril 2013 COCHABAMBA | BOLIVIA

Ricardo Prevé, and produced by Al Jazeera television network, as part of its program “Witness”, will be shown. The documentary will be released this week as part of the event. (Full film: <http://aje.me/11mBF7A>)

Argentinean soccer player Lionel Messi sent a video message (<http://youtu.be/Al7zfgXgvSk>) in support of the film and the fight against Chagas, stressing the importance of teamwork amongst the key players to combat the disease.

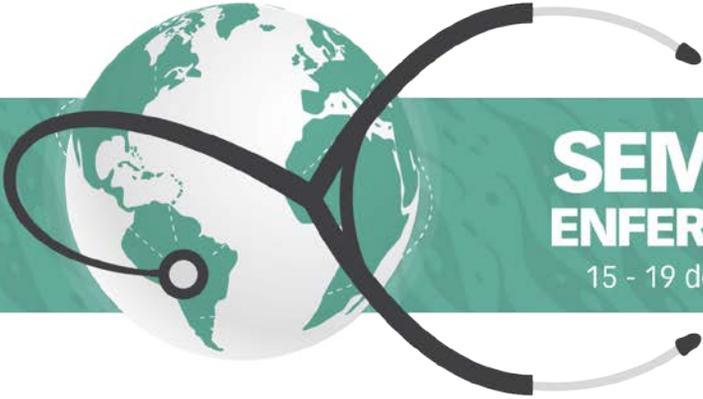
In addition to the Minister of Health of Bolivia, ISGlobal managing director Dr. Pedro Alonso; DNDi Executive Director Dr. Bernard Pecoul; President of Mundo Sano Foundation Dr. Silvia Gold; Dean of the Faculty of Medicine of the Universidad Mayor de San Simon, Manuel Monroy; and the rector of the Universidad Mayor de San Simon, Dr. Lucio Gonzalez, will speak at the opening ceremony.

In Cochabamba, there are more than 670,000 people living with Chagas disease. In Bolivia, the figure rises to 1 million people affected by the disease, mostly rural populations.

Dr. Manuel Monroy, Dean of the Faculty of Medicine of Universidad Mayor de San Simon, welcomed the speakers and said, “Research must be linked to capacity building of human resources and patient care in hospitals.”

Dr. Silvia Gold, President of Mundo Sano Foundation, an Argentinean institution that has conducted research and taken actions to address various neglected diseases since 1993, said, “To overcome the problems of access issues in health, political will is necessary. But, we need technological knowledge, financing, and medicines...above all, this should be done in coordination. Each of these components is necessary, but none alone is sufficient. Only convergence will allow the problems to be solved. I think we are now on a good path because we are making efforts together bringing knowledge and capacities to health authorities, academia, civil society, and patient associations.”

"Knowledge is only valuable if it benefits the people who need it," said Dr. Pedro Alonso, director of the Institute for Global Health of Barcelona (ISGlobal), a Spanish institution that aims to help expand the efforts taken by the international community to meet the challenges of tackling health issues in a globalized world. He called for all actors to come together and work towards a more just world.



SEMANA CHAGAS ENFERMEDAD DESATENDIDA

15 - 19 de abril 2013 COCHABAMBA | BOLIVIA

Meanwhile, Dr. Bernard Pecoul, Executive Director of the Drugs for Neglected Diseases initiative (DNDi) said, "Since 2003, we have focused our efforts on improving access to treatment for Chagas patients. In addition to delivering a paediatric dosage form of benznidazole in 2011 for affected children, DNDi is committed to delivering new treatments, together with our partners, especially in Latin America." DNDi is an international research and development (R&D) organization that strives for safer, more efficacious and cheaper treatments for the most neglected patients.

The ambassador of Spain to Bolivia, Mr. Angel Vazquez, assured that in his country of origin Chagas is an important health problem and called attention to develop a global strategy. "The experience in Spain could be an opportunity of insight into treatment of this disease," he said.

Chagas Week aims to bring together specialists from around the world to address general aspects of Chagas disease, its key issues for prevention, advances in diagnosis and treatment, and the challenges posed by global migration movements.

About the documentary film "Chagas: A Silent Killer"

Following the opening ceremony, a preview will be shown of the documentary film "Chagas: A Silent Killer", directed by Argentinean filmmaker Ricardo Prevé, and produced by Al Jazeera television network, as part of its program "Witness", on which is airing this week. Given the interest in this disease, soccer player Lionel Messi recorded a video message in support of the film, which took place in Rosario, Argentina, his hometown.

After the opening ceremony, the Symposium on Chagas Disease took place, with advances in antiparasitical treatment and epidemiological changes in disease transmission discussed. The activities end on Friday April 19.

More information on Chagas Week: Neglected Disease

The opening ceremony took place a day after the first full day of meetings, which took place the on *Resource coordination to evaluate and improve the health of Latin American migrants* (Cohemi). Issues of neglected diseases and migration were addressed. The symposium included sessions on "Latin American migration to the European Union and Chagas disease" and "Socio-cultural factors related to Chagas disease", by representatives from CRESIB-ISGlobal, José Muñoz and Laia Ventura (Spain). This was followed by an analysis of the "Status and management of patients with Chagas in Bolivia", by the representative of the National Chagas Control Program,





SEMANA CHAGAS ENFERMEDAD DESATENDIDA

15 - 19 de abril 2013 COCHABAMBA | BOLIVIA

Max Enriquez (Bolivia).

For more information or questions about the event, you can reach the following numbers:
4451676 to 4797145 or write to the following email: organización@semanachagas.net

Press Contacts:

Andres Rodriguez

prensa@semanachagas.net / dabolar@gmail.com

Phone (+591) 707.21987

Nilce Mendoza

nilcemendoza@yahoo.com

Phone (+591) 774.30092

