VISIBILIZING INVISIBLE DISEASES: FACE CHAGAS DISEASE

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Abstract

There are forgotten patients and forgotten diseases and forgetting has a direct relationship with the profitability of treatments. Sometimes even though the number of patients is overwhelmingly high, their purchasing power is so low that no industry is willing to produce the necessary treatments even if there are effective drugs. This situation is dramatic when many of these diseases are deadly without treatment, affect millions of people and their main causal agent is poverty. With 7 million affected and 25 million people at risk, Chagas disease is one of the most dramatic examples of a forgotten disease. Chagas disease is a serious parasitic disease that causes more than 7000 deaths per year. The main causal agent is none other than poverty and unequal distribution of health resources, which means that less than 1% of those affected can access treatment. The majority of those affected are in Latin America where vector transmission occurs but migratory movements have made it an international health problem. In addition, Chagas disease is a stigmatizing disease since it mainly affects people with limited resources. This fact, together with the popular belief that Chagas has no solution, means that those affected do not receive treatment. Even in countries like Spain, many affected are unaware that they have the right to diagnosis and treatment. Therefore, from the subject of Parasitology of the degree of Pharmacy at San Jorge University aware of this situation, different initiatives have been carried out to visualize the Chagas disease. During 7 academic years, through the pedagogical strategy of Service Learning, the 2nd year students have carried out awareness campaigns in the University environment and outside it in collaboration with various NGOs. In them, the future pharmacists designed their own campaign against the disease and put it in motion in their immediate environment. Thanks to these initiatives, materials of great informative value have been generated, such as videos, radio spots, podcasts or web pages that have been used by various organizations in their fight against Chagas disease. Throughout these years, it has been possible to collaborate with Doctors Without Borders, Momin (Movement of Indigenous Women of the World), Radio Chaco (women's radio in Bolivia), Mundi Aragón Doctors and ISIGlobal.

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