DNDi
Best Science for the Most Neglected

DISEASE FACTSHEET

CHAGAS DISEASE

Searching for shorter, safer, more effective treatments to stop a silent killer

Chagas disease, also known as American trypanosomiasis – is caused by the *T. cruzi* parasite. Spread by the bite of 'kissing bugs', it can also be passed from mother to child during pregnancy and childbirth. In Latin America, Chagas causes more deaths than any other parasitic disease. Often unnoticed and undiagnosed, it can lead to irreversible damage to the heart and other organs.

Current treatments were discovered more than 50 years ago. They must be taken for at least eight weeks, often cause significant side effects, and are not suitable for women who are – or could become – pregnant.

FACTS

» About **8 million** people living with Chagas worldwide

» About **35%** experience cardiac or other organ damage

» Over **1 million** women of childbearing potential living with Chagas

» THE PUSH FOR PROGRESS

Together with our partners, DNDi delivered the first paediatric formulation of benznidazole in 2011. In 2009, we established the Chagas Clinical Research Platform, now a global network of over 500 members from more than 100 institutions across 28 countries, working to coordinate research priorities, support the development of new treatments, and advocate for improved access to diagnosis and care with and for people most at risk.

OUR GOAL IS NOW to continue advancing the development of all-new potential treatments while working to improve current treatments with simpler, safer, shorter regimens using existing drugs. Our teams are also working with partners in the most affected countries to simplify diagnosis, treatment, and follow-up, strengthen access to timely and appropriate diagnosis and care, and help eliminate transmission during pregnancy and childbirth.

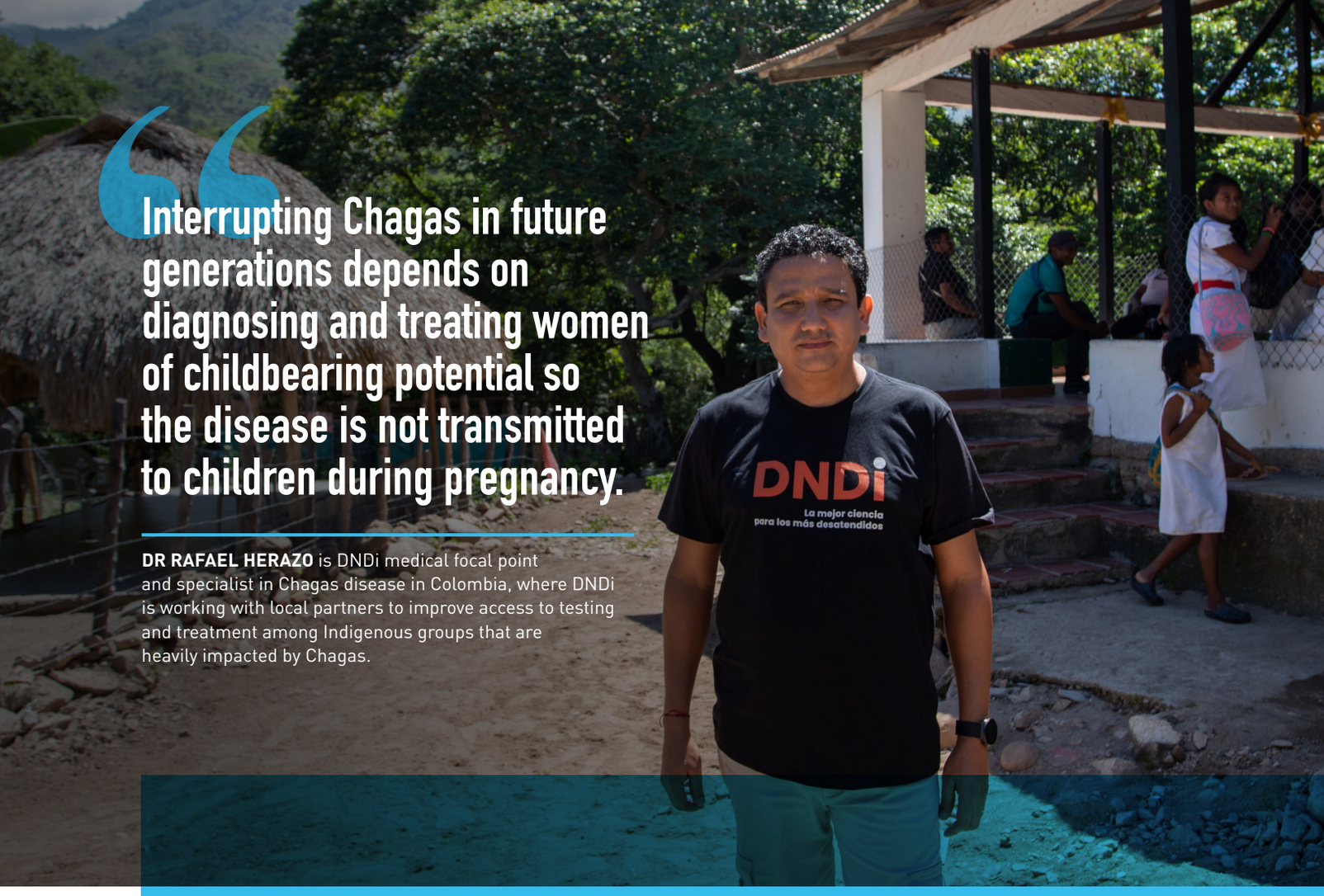
MEETING THE URGENT NEED FOR INNOVATION

For decades, drug discovery and development for Chagas have been slow and fraught with challenges. **In 2025, DNDi and AN2 Therapeutics, Inc. initiated a new collaboration to advance the clinical development of AN2-502998 – a promising new oral drug candidate for chronic Chagas disease.** A Phase I clinical trial of the compound led by AN2 in 2025 is expected to be followed by a Phase II proof-of-concept trial in 2026 – leveraging DNDi's expertise and extensive network of clinical trial sites in Latin America. We are also providing expertise to support a Novartis Phase II study of LXE408 in patients with chronic indeterminate infection.

With additional advances in DNDi's earlier-stage research into novel drug candidates, the R&D pipeline for Chagas is looking more promising than ever. In partnership with GSK, the University of Dundee Drug Discovery Unit (DDU), and the University of Washington, our drug discovery teams have identified and prioritized the most promising leads in the UW series. More than 150 promising compounds in the MT series were synthesized in collaboration with Tanabe Pharma, with a strong focus on improving drug metabolism and pharmacokinetic properties.

ADVANCING DEVELOPMENT OF A CRITICAL TEST OF CURE

One of the main challenges in drug development for Chagas is the lack of analytical tools to monitor disease progression and response to treatment.



> **Interrupting Chagas in future generations depends on diagnosing and treating women of childbearing potential so the disease is not transmitted to children during pregnancy.**

DR RAFAEL HERAZO is DNDi medical focal point and specialist in Chagas disease in Colombia, where DNDi is working with local partners to improve access to testing and treatment among Indigenous groups that are heavily impacted by Chagas.

After initial work with the NHEPACHA Iberoamerican Network, DNDi partnered with InfYnity Biomarkers to develop a test that can detect treatment response more quickly than conventional techniques.

Recognized by the DNDi Scientific Advisory Committee as the 2025 Project of the Year in pre-clinical research, DNDi's work on biomarkers for Chagas showed that the MultiCruzi assay demonstrated a measurable decline in antibodies to *T. cruzi* within only a few months in patients who had been treated for Chagas. **This achievement paves the way for a critical test of cure that can be used in clinical trials to help facilitate regulatory decision-making, and in treatment settings to determine treatment outcomes more quickly.** Additional studies are now underway to further assess the potential of the MultiCruzi assay as a marker for parasitological cure in adult patients treated with antiparasitic drugs. We have also advanced development of target product profiles for Chagas disease biomarker assays in collaboration with the Chagas research community.

EXPANDING ACCESS TO TIMELY DIAGNOSIS AND TREATMENT

Only an estimated 10% of people living with Chagas have been diagnosed – and even fewer treated. In 2015, DNDi launched the Chagas Access Project, working with local, regional, and national partners in several endemic countries in Latin America to expand access to diagnosis and treatment using 'test-and-treat' approaches.

In partnership with FIND and local health authorities, DNDi has evaluated the performance of rapid diagnostic tests in test-and-treat strategies in Colombia, Guatemala, and Argentina, with favourable results.

Faster and simpler than traditional lab-based testing, the tests have the potential to help expand access to diagnosis and treatment and eliminate mother-to-child transmission. In 2025, Colombia incorporated rapid tests into its national technical guidelines, based on studies conducted by the National Institute of Health (INS) with technical support from DNDi. Internal validation processes are underway in Argentina and Guatemala to assess how the approach could be implemented in these two countries.

Alongside these efforts, the Nuestroben Phase III clinical trial testing shorter regimens of benznidazole expanded to two new sites in Bolivia in 2025, complementing six sites already active in Argentina. Conducted by DNDi in partnership with the Chagas Clinical Research Platform, Fundación Mundo Sano, and Laboratorio Elea Phoenix, the study is expected to complete recruitment in 2027.