

Bringing Chagas disease to people's attention

Explaining Chagas disease through the stories of patients in Bolivia.

Apr 14, 2021

Chagas disease affects approximately six million people, mainly in Latin America. The disease can be silent for decades until it may become fatal, leading to cardiovascular complications in up to 30% of patients. Like other neglected tropical diseases, Chagas disease often affects poor and marginalized communities.

For the second time in history, the global community officially celebrated World Chagas Disease Day in April 2021 to bring the disease to people's attention. Discover the stories of people affected by Chagas disease.

Photographer Ana Ferreira travelled to Bolivia, where Chagas disease is endemic, to meet people affected by Chagas disease and doctors.



Julia (left) lives in Valle Nuevo, a farming community in the department of Chuquisaca in Bolivia. Julia has Chagas disease and her parents died from the disease. Her partner Felix (right) passed away in 2017 from heart failure due to Chagas disease. He had been diagnosed a few years before. Julia and Felix have three children, but very sadly lost one son. Although he was never diagnosed, they suspected his sudden death was due to Chagas disease.

Photo: Couple in Bolivia by Ana Ferreira, Bolivia



Chagas disease is endemic in Valle Nuevo. Bolivia is the epicenter of Chagas disease worldwide, with the highest prevalence across the globe.

Photo: *Valle Nuevo by Ana Ferreira, Bolivia*



A doctor performs an electrocardiogram prior to putting a Chagas disease patient on treatment. When people already have an advanced heart disease due to Chagas, it is not recommended to treat them with an antiparasitic.

Photo: *Physician performs electrocardiogram by Ana Ferreira, Bolivia*



When Felix was diagnosed with Chagas disease, he already had heart failure caused by Chagas. When the doctor told him there was no cure and that he needed a transplant, Felix could not sleep for several nights because he knew he could not afford to pay for a transplant.

Photo: *Felix by Ana Ferreira, Bolivia*



Chagas disease made Felix extremely weak, and he could not work anymore. He would accompany Julia in the field without being able to help her.

Photo: *Julia and Felix by Ana Ferreira, Bolivia*



Julia lights candles for her parents who died from Chagas disease. A year after this photo was taken, Julia lit a candle for Felix who died from the same disease.

Photo: *Julia at a grave by Ana Ferreira, Bolivia*

Chagas disease

Novartis is committed to reimagining the fight against Chagas disease and advocating for an integrated, end-to-end care approach.

[Learn More](#)

See how Chagas disease impacts the lives of people and their families. [#NovartisGlobalHealth](#)

Source URL: <https://prod1.novartis.com/stories/bringing-chagas-disease-peoples-attention>

List of links present in page

1. <https://prod1.novartis.com/stories/bringing-chagas-disease-peoples-attention>
2. <https://prod1.novartis.com/tags/category/access-healthcare>
3. <https://prod1.novartis.com/diseases/chagas-disease>