**Chagas disease: review of needs, neglect, and**

**obstacles to treatment access in Latin America**

Chagas disease (CD) has been around for more than one century; however, it

continues to be one of the most prevalent public health problems in Latin America

to date. Despite the right to health and access to essential medications, CD is a key

example of the barriers to accessing primary health care (PHC) services.

Information on production costs in pharmaceutical industries is generally withheld.

Decoding production costs for CD treatment may be useful for patients, managers,

and governments to have adequate information for decision-making and advocacy

planning to increase access to CD treatment with more precision. Given the lack of

knowledge and information regarding the access to CD diagnosis and

treatment, Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) Brazil conducted an investigation in

2015 in collaboration with a consultant to better understand the global standards

for the production of medication for the treatment of CD, specifically benznidazole

(BZN).

The investigation included interviews of laboratory staff and questionnaires sent to

laboratories that manufacture the raw materials for the final BZN pill. From the

information collected, an analysis model of cost appropriation was built based on

the methodology proposed by Pinheiro et al., in 2006. This model has already been

validated by the World Health Organization (WHO) and has been used in previous

studies by the consultancy agency, particularly those investigating the cost of

antiretroviral drugs.

The model is based on a fluxogram where the standard cost

(or unitary production cost) is pre-determined and obtained through the detailed

study of the use of raw materials, labor, equipment, and the sum of all procedures

that make up the global process to manufacture one unit of the physical product.

Thus, direct costs (depreciation of equipment, labor, formulation, packaging, and

domestic transportation), indirect costs of production (overhead, administration,

research, reinvestment, and general production costs), and profit margin are

analyzed in the model. In this review, findings from the model are highlighted in

order to shed light on the factors affecting access to BZN in Latin America and

particularly Brazil.

.