

Neglected diseases

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ABSTRACT

On April 11, 2024, a group of students from the second period of Medicine at ITPAC held an action in the parish of Santa Luzia, in Porto Nacional - TO, to share knowledge about neglected diseases with the elderly in the community. The focus was on leprosy, Chagas disease, visceral and cutaneous leishmaniasis, and schistosomiasis. We used A4 sheets with illustrative images to facilitate the visual understanding of the participants. We held a conversation circle explaining the treatment and ways to prevent each disease. According to Macedo (2020), the term "neglected" reflects the lack of interest and investment on the part of the pharmaceutical industry and other health sectors, which aggravates the situation and perpetuates the cycle of poverty and disease. Therefore, it is critical to promote awareness of these diseases and mobilize resources for effective prevention, diagnosis, and treatment strategies. The elderly actively participated, reporting their personal experiences and those of family members. We observed that many had superficial knowledge about these diseases, but few knew the appropriate forms of prevention and treatment. Leprosy and Chagas disease were better known, while leishmaniasis and schistosomiasis were less understood. We realize the need for continuous and targeted educational actions on neglected diseases, in addition to common themes such as high blood pressure and diabetes, especially in vulnerable communities. The exchange of information in the format of a conversation circle proved to be effective, allowing a direct and enlightening interaction. The use of images facilitated the understanding of the concepts addressed, the action disseminated knowledge about neglected diseases in an effective way and demonstrated the importance of continuous educational activities to promote public health, however the continuity of this type of approach is essential, as the participation of the elderly revealed a great interest and the need for more information on the subject.

Keywords: Prevention, Neglected diseases, vulnerable community.

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