**CHAGAS: SILENT KILLER**

Chagas disease is a neglected tropical disease caused by the Trypanosoma cruzi parasite. It is spread mostly by insects known as Triatominae, or kissing bugs. If left untreated, Chagas can cause serious problems to the heart and digestive system.

The kissing bug (also known as vinchuca, barbeiro, pito, chinche, chipo) carries the parasite.

1. The bug hides in the walls and under the roofs of mud and straw shacks.

2. It bites people in their sleep and defecates close to the bite, causing them to contract the disease.

3. The parasitic infection can also be transmitted by:
   - contaminated food
   - blood transfusions and organ transplants
   - mother to child transmission

4. The parasitic infection can also be transmitted by:
   - contaminated food
   - blood transfusions and organ transplants
   - mother to child transmission

**Acute phase (2 months)**
- Mild or no symptoms

**Chronic asymptomatic phase (10-30 years)**
- No symptoms

**Chronic clinical phase**
- 1 in 3 infected people develop heart and digestive system problems, which may lead to death

6,7M people affected worldwide

12,000 people die each year from this disease

1 in 10 people are diagnosed

75 MILLION people live at risk of contracting Chagas in Latin America

Once entirely confined to Latin America, Chagas has since spread to other continents as a result of migration.

**CONTROL & PREVENTION**
- Spray houses and surrounding areas with insecticides to eliminate the bugs
- Screen blood and organ donors
- Screen all pregnant women and children of infected mothers

**TREATMENT**
- Recommended for:
  - All infants with congenital infection
  - All adults during the early chronic phase
  - All women of childbearing age

During the late chronic phase, additional lifelong medical treatment and surgery are usually indicated.