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SCIENCE AND THE SERTÃO: AN INTERACTIVE DIALOGUE IN THE PREVENTION OF CHAGAS DISEASE

KLEBER RIBEIRO FIDELIS¹, MARICÉLIA DE AQUINO SANTANA², MARCELA CUNHA DA SILVA³,
MATHEUS HENRIQUE DOS SANTOS OLIVEIRA², CHRISTIANE CARLOS ARAÚJO DE
NEGREIROS⁴, CARLOS RAMON DO NASCIMENTO BRITO², VAGNER JOSÉ MENDONÇA³.

¹INSTITUTO OSWALDO CRUZ, RIO DE JANEIRO, RIO DE JANEIRO, BRASIL;

²UNIVERSIDADE FEDERAL DO RIO GRANDE DO NORTE, NATAL, RIO GRANDE DO NORTE, BRASIL;

³UNIVERSIDADE FEDERAL DO PIAUÍ, TERESINA, PI, BRASIL.

ABSTRACT

Chagas Disease, discovered by Carlos Chagas in 1909, remains a public health challenge, especially in endemic areas. Innovative health education strategies are essential to expand knowledge on the topic and promote prevention, particularly in an increasingly digitalized world. This study aimed to develop a comic book (HQ) that personifies *Trypanosoma cruzi* and engages the public in a playful and educational manner, bridging the scientific legacy of Carlos Chagas to modern Chagas disease prevention through interactive and accessible resources. The educational comic merges tradition and innovation to raise awareness about Chagas disease, incorporating regional elements from the Brazilian Northeast. Using accessible language and interactive visuals, it personifies the *T. cruzi* parasite to explain its biological cycle, the acute and chronic phases of the disease, and the pathogen-host relationship. Lighthearted dialogues between the parasite, the kissing bug (barbeiro), and humans blend entertainment with scientific information, emphasizing preventive measures. The digital and interactive format aims to broaden reach, promoting health in a playful yet informative way. The comic demonstrates high potential to democratize complex concepts in parasitology, facilitating identification and understanding among rural populations and fostering engagement. The inclusion of regional terms honored cultural memory, while the interactive approach enables better content assimilation by individuals from endemic communities, healthcare professionals, and students. This initiative shows that dialogue between scientific history and contemporary technologies can transform historical content into practical tools for prevention, early diagnosis, and stigma reduction. The comic transcends its original format, serving as a model for educational initiatives that unite scientific rigor, community engagement, and digital innovation, strengthening public health in a globalized context.

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Keywords: *Trypanosoma cruzi*. Comic book. Neglected diseases. Information technology. Health education.

 (11) 93232-3976

 www.parasito2025.com

 info@parasito2025.com

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SOCIEDADE BRASILEIRA DE PARASITOLOGIA

SOCIEDADE TÉCNICO CIENTÍFICA BRASILEIRA DE PARASITOLOGIA (SBP) – CNPJ: 05.000.796/0001-04

Rua 235, N° 115, Quadra 62, Setor Leste Universitário, Goiânia, GO - CEP: 74.605-050