HOW WOULD YOU RAISE AWARENESS OF NEGLECTED TROPICAL DISEASES?

A COMPILATION OF WINNING STUDENT ENTRIES
Contents

Foreword, 5

Winners — Student Engagement Essay Challenge

Five Neglected Truths About NTDs: Using Visual Media to Raise Awareness, 7
  Keng Hou Mak, Graduate Student, Baylor College of Medicine

Taking the “Neglect” Out of “Neglected Tropical Diseases”, 11
  Anjali Bhatla, Undergraduate Student, Rice University

Honorable Mentions — Student Engagement Essay Challenge

Tropical Diseases Campaign, 15
  Juan Ulises Rojo, Graduate Student, Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center

Broadcasting Change on College Campuses, 17
  Elisabeth Kalomeris, Undergraduate Student, Rice University

Winner — Children’s Outreach Concept Challenge

Combating NTDs through Early Education, Detection and Prevention: An Interactive Activity for Sixth-Grade Children, 21
  Jennifer Gia-Linh Nguyen, D.M.D. candidate, University of Sydney
  Emmy Sun, Undergraduate Student, Western University, Ontario
Foreword

This year the Baker Institute Center for Health and Biosciences held two student competitions called the “2015 NTD Challenge” in partnership with the National School of Tropical Medicine at Baylor College of Medicine, the END Fund, the Sabin Vaccine Institute and Texas Children’s Hospital Center for Vaccine Development. The purpose was to engage college- and graduate-level students to identify new and innovative ways to raise awareness of neglected tropical diseases (NTDs). NTDs are a set of parasitic, viral, and bacterial infections that afflict over one billion people worldwide, but the majority of these conditions are understudied relative to their impact on human health.

For the first challenge, students submitted essays full of creative ideas for raising awareness of NTDs around their campuses and communities, an important first step toward addressing the estimated 12 million people in the United States with NTDs. For our second challenge, students created outreach projects to help describe these complex issues to young children. University students from around the world submitted unique and imaginative ideas including graphic novels, a book, songs, video game ideas and even a board game.

In the end, we had to make a hard choice and pick only a small number of winners. The two winning essays and two honorable mentions for the first challenge as well as an essay by the winning team for the outreach challenge are in this compilation. We were blown away by the response we got from students and hope to be able to continue with new challenges in 2016.

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Five Neglected Truths About NTDs: Using Visual Media to Raise Awareness

by Keng Hou Mak, Graduate Student
Graduate Winner — Student Engagement Essay Challenge

I was telling a friend how many Africans are affected by neglected tropical diseases (NTDs) and how these diseases perpetuate poverty. She was convinced of their global importance. But apparently, my speech did not stir her until I told her the scabies she just recovered from was one of the NTDs. This is a clear example showing that the collective term “NTDs” might be confusing. The term might seem even more distant from Americans who do not live in the poorest neighborhoods and never have contracted any of the NTDs. These people are mostly unaware of the pain and suffering caused by NTDs, despite their far-reaching socioeconomic significance for the affected population and America as a whole. One way to link individual NTDs and relate them to the public is through visual means. A quick Google search for “neglected tropical diseases” returns few impressive images—mostly of African kids in a poor village setting. Therefore, for current and future campaigns, we need to generate diverse visual materials that the public can relate to.

Another property of NTDs, unlike many household-name diseases, is that many of them are readily preventable at a negligible cost, with tremendous gains in the quality of life and productivity of the affected. A fundraising campaign that makes use of this fact will get the message through to the public. I am proposing a campaign that combines these two concepts through the use of social media.

Campaign: Five NTs (Neglected Truths) About NTDs

The campaign starts with a 2D graphic design contest with themes on important messages about NTDs, and then generates an online presence with a slideshow article on five neglected facts about NTDs, using materials from the design contest. The online article will be set up to allow small, fixed donations through a one-touch method.

1. 2D Graphic Design Contest
   - Why 2D visual: It is versatile, powerful and instant. 2D visuals can be adapted to different media and for various uses, can be more powerful than texts, and stir up instant response from viewers, which cannot be achieved by videos.
   - Goals:
     — Increase awareness among contestants and encourage them to think more deeply about NTDs through the creation process
     — Generate visual materials for the rest of the campaign and for future use
How Would You Raise Awareness of Neglected Tropical Diseases?

- **Who participates:** The contest will be open to the public and advertised, in particular, to students through NTD groups in schools.
- **Format:** Entries can be 2D visuals in any form including infographics, memes, photos, graphics and comics.
- **Topics:** Five core messages are determined by the campaign organizers, such as the parasite-poverty loop, NTDs are on American soil, the broad (and often invisible) impacts of NTDs, and the seven most common NTDs.
- **How to determine the winner:** Contest entries are displayed under each of the “neglected facts” in the online slideshow article. The entry that gathers the most “likes” from the public within a period of time (e.g., 4 weeks) is the winner.
- **Materials could also be used as a Wikipedia page or image collection for NTDs groups at schools and universities.**

2. **Online Slideshow Article on “Five NTs (Neglected Truths) About NTDs”**
   - **Why five:** This format of article—e.g., “Top 10 Restaurants in Houston” or “Five Things You Didn’t Know About Cats”—is the most likely to be shared on social media, which will increase the chance of getting the messages to more people.
   - **Goals:**
     - Generate an online presence through sharing of the article for fundraising and spreading the message
     - Create a platform to determine the winner of the contest
   - **Contents of the article:** The article will be organized into five slides on the core messages used for the contest. The text of the article will include relevant information about each message, provided by the organizing committee from the relevant literature and sources. The images for the slideshow will come from the contestants in the 2D design contest. A “Donate” link, described below, will also be included. NTDs-focused groups in schools and contestants are expected to be the first to share the article on social media.

3. **One-Touch Donation**
   Just 50 cents can protect a person from the seven most common NTDs for a year. The campaign can use this fact to get more people involved and, importantly, to demonstrate how easy it is to make a difference. To do this, I propose a fundraising component asking for a fixed amount small enough that people seldom hesitate to donate (e.g., $5). To make the process even easier, donation can be collected using an app from the Apple app store or Google Play that is linked to their credit card information. The donation can be done in one step. The app could simply be a chart showing daily updates on the amount raised by the campaign that also shows how many people can be saved from NTDs since the beginning of the campaign. This gives the donor a sense of being part of a bigger community that fights against NTDs.

   This part of the campaign complements the previous part on generating an online presence, which is necessary to reach as many people as possible.
Keng Hou Mak, originally from Hong Kong, is a Ph.D. candidate in the Integrative Molecular and Biomedical Sciences Program at Baylor College of Medicine in Houston. His interest in NTDs started with his thesis project on the evolutionary conservation of a stress signaling mechanism, which he studies in the model organism Caenorhabditis elegans, a small, non-parasitic nematode. Mak learned that this worm, which has been studied extensively, could be used to provide the knowledge and tools needed to understand the parasitic nematodes that cause NTDs. He was struck by the impact of basic science on global socioeconomic issues, such as those caused by NTDs, and realized that education and community outreach was also critical to making a difference.
How Would You Raise Awareness of Neglected Tropical Diseases?
Taking the “Neglect” Out of “Neglected Tropical Diseases”

by Anjali Bhatla, Undergraduate Student
Undergraduate Winner – Student Engagement Essay Challenge

Most people have never heard of diseases such as Chagas, elephantiasis, or ascariasis. However, these illnesses are some of the 17 infectious diseases the World Health Organization has categorized as “neglected tropical diseases” (NTDs). NTDs are said to affect the “bottom billion” of the world’s population, or those who are living on less than $1.25 per day. NTDs, which have a high morbidity, have been shown to perpetuate the cycle of poverty due to their ability to impair physical and cognitive development, negatively affect maternal and child health, and socially stigmatize those who are afflicted. Regardless of the disabling economic consequences of NTDs, they have been largely ignored, continuing to persist in the world’s most marginalized populations. Contrary to popular belief, NTDs do not just exist in developing countries, but rather have been shown to also exist in pockets of poverty in developed countries. Given the neglected nature of NTDs, there is plenty that we as students can do to make a difference in the lives of those living with NTDs. Ending the neglect requires three steps: 1) education, 2) awareness, and 3) advocacy.

Education is a key component in impacting the field of NTDs. Through educating ourselves, we can articulate the importance of NTDs to others. This requires understanding what aspects of NTDs contribute to the neglect they continually face. First, they have a high morbidity, rather than high mortality, rendering them “less important” than diseases such as HIV/AIDS and tuberculosis. However, morbidity can have just as disastrous consequences as mortality, and NTDs render those infected chronically disabled. Second, NTDs predominately affect those living in impoverished countries, which makes it difficult to communicate the ramifications of the diseases to individuals with the social and political capital to aid endemic countries. Third, the demographics of infected individuals make it unprofitable for pharmaceutical companies to pursue therapies for NTDs. These factors are the reasons why it is of utmost importance for us as students to educate ourselves about NTDs and communicate the value of preventing these diseases.

Engaging the public is imperative if we are to mobilize a movement to end NTDs. This requires using our knowledge to disseminate information on the social and economic consequences of NTDs and the need for the public to address these issues through fundraising and advocacy. A great way for students to increase awareness of NTDs on campus is to start an END7 chapter at their college. END7 aims to increase awareness of the seven most common NTDs and raise funds for mass drug administration, which can greatly reduce the incidence of NTDs in endemic countries. Through a student organization such as END7, undergraduates can exchange ideas on how to address the health disparities prevalent in endemic countries, engage in
dialogue with peers on the importance of addressing NTDs, and implement creative events, programming, and social media campaigns to increase understanding of NTDs at a societal level. The team that will be spearheading END7 at Rice University, of which I am a member, has discussed a number of creative projects, including depicting stories of patients with NTDs, creating an “NTD week” to educate students on the scientific and social aspects of a different disease each day, and sponsoring a 5K with seven water stops, each featuring information on an individual NTD. Utilizing social media can be a way of reaching a much wider audience, and college students are in a unique position to capitalize on the use of technology. A social media campaign in which a person takes a picture of themselves taking action against NTDs and uses the hashtag #nomoreneglect could be a potential way of incorporating a much larger audience into the conversation. Ultimately we want to increase awareness in order to spur action in others, and I believe a great way of doing this would be to create a service-learning grant program in which students could apply for money to implement a project that addresses NTDs in a creative way. These grants could fund projects such as a student policy competition on NTDs or the creation of curriculum to educate K-12 students on NTDs. By funding student projects around the country and world, each person can have a leadership role in taking action against NTDs.

Ultimately, I believe policy structures need to be utilized in order to address the health disparities that cause NTDs. Low socioeconomic status, inadequate health systems, and the need for proper infrastructure for clean water and sanitation are root causes of NTDs. We need to frame NTDs as a social justice issue in health: a realization that elements of society disproportionately contribute to this public health issue and policy should be drafted to aid those in need. Students can have a profound impact on policy by speaking with their local and national representatives about important issues and advocating for certain pieces of legislation. For example, most of the funding for fighting NTDs comes from developed countries, and policymakers are proposing a cut in funding in the current US budget. By calling representatives, writing letters, and signing petitions, it is possible to convince Congress of the importance of retaining funding for NTDs. As students, our voice is incredibly important, and we have a social responsibility to engage in the political process and advocate for action on NTDs at the governmental level.

More than one billion of the world’s population is suffering from NTDs, a staggering amount of people to be affected by a group of infections few have heard of. We cannot continue to let this injustice occur, and as the next generation we need to be civically minded students. Addressing the issue of NTDs is critical to improving the health and economic productivity of over one-seventh of the world’s population. Through education, awareness, and advocacy of NTDs, we can drive significant social change and work toward taking the “neglect” out of “neglected tropical diseases.”
Anjali Bhatla is a junior at Rice University majoring in health sciences and policy studies. She grew up in Harlingen, Texas, where she became interested in policy as a way to reduce the health disparities she observed in her hometown’s low-income areas. Bhatla founded the Rice University chapter of the END7 campaign, which aims to raise awareness and funds for the seven most common NTDs. In 2015, she was awarded a Loewenstern Fellowship, which she will use to pursue international service work on NTDs. Bhatla has also been named a Rice Distinguished Trustee Scholar and a National Coca-Cola Scholar, and serves on the State Farm Youth Advisory Board. Her other activities include the Rice Student Association, the Rice Pre-Medical Society, the Alternative Spring Break Program and the Baylor College of Medicine Patient Discharge Initiative. Bhatla plans to pursue an MD/MBA dual degree and ultimately develop and implement policies that help make health care systems more equitable and efficient.
Tropical Diseases Campaign

by Juan Ulises Rojo, Graduate Student
Graduate Honorable Mention – Student Engagement Essay Challenge

With the spread of globalization and the Internet, an awareness campaign has the potential to reach millions of people and educate them about neglected tropical diseases (NTDs). I propose the creation of a new campaign, called “Tropical Diseases Campaign” (TDC), to reach people through social media and events.

TDC will have a website with three main components: a YouTube channel, a blog, and a “take action” portal, with the goal of reaching as many people as possible. First, an active YouTube channel linked to the TDC website will broadcast short clips of 5–10 minutes teaching about different NTDs. Individual videos about each NTD will present and explain information in general language, and new videos will be uploaded on a regular basis. These videos will teach about various aspects of NTDs, including causative agents, epidemiology, clinical cases, current treatments, and preventive strategies. Viewers will be encouraged to share the video and visit the TDC website. The purpose of these short clips is to make the information accessible—people can watch the videos at any time, and the videos leave them with a message. Also, YouTube channels are popular because of the profit earned by the number of views and advertisements. The money earned from the YouTube channel can be income for the self-supporting TDC.

The blog component of TDC will be designed to invite people to share ideas, anecdotes, videos, and photos about their experiences with NTDs. The purpose of the blog is to give a voice to those who have experienced NTDs firsthand. For example, physicians, scientists, and people who live in endemic areas can all share their experiences.

The final main component of the TDC website is the “take action” portal. This part of the website will provide links and information about volunteer opportunities to help people living in endemic areas, job positions related to treating NTDs, and research opportunities. This section will also provide information about universities that have ongoing research related to NTDs for students interested in graduate school. The “take action” portal will also include a donation option that will support people living in endemic areas.

Although there are a number of websites that provide sources and information about NTDs, few people are aware of these websites, and thus the message is not able to reach the public. The main challenge for the success of TDC is to reach a large audience and encourage them to take action.
There are three ways people can make a difference and raise awareness through the TDC: 1) creating partnerships with universities, 2) selling merchandise, and 3) organizing an NTDs awareness walk. TDC can create partnerships with universities and promote student clubs that focus on NTDs awareness. Another way to promote awareness of NTDs is merchandise. In fact, merchandise has played a strong role in promoting awareness of diabetes, breast cancer, and HIV/AIDS. T-shirts, bracelets, ribbons, and bumper stickers are commonly used to invite people to participate in battling these diseases. The TDC could also sell merchandise to support awareness of NTDs. Finally, organizing walks or runs can also help engage and educate people about a cause. In fact, the Making Strides Against Breast Cancer walk organized by the American Cancer Society is a powerful event that engages the community to increase awareness and raise money. The same approach can be implemented by the TDC. A Shoeless Walk a Mile event for NTD awareness could bring the community together as well as secure sponsors, in order to provide donations that will be used to treat, prevent, and research NTDs. More importantly, this event will bring media attention to reach more people who can participate in the campaign.

While this proposal may appear broad, we need to keep in mind that no single approach will be effective in spreading awareness of NTDs. It is important to use as many resources as possible to reach people and educate them about NTDs. Hopefully, in the near future, with the help of the TDC, these diseases will no longer be neglected.

Juan Ulises Rojo is a second-year graduate student researching schistosomiasis at Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center in Lubbock. Raised in Ciudad Juárez, México, Rojo moved to the United States after high school and attended the University of Texas at El Paso. An introductory class on infectious diseases led to a fascination with the study of parasites. He was later accepted into the National Institute of Minority Health and Heath Disparities International Research Training program, and learned more about parasitic diseases in rural communities at the University of Costa Rica. He graduated with a B.S. in clinical laboratory science from UT El Paso in 2012 and worked as a medical technologist for one year before deciding to enter graduate school. Rojo plans to continue a career focused on the study and eradication of NTDs.
Broadcasting Change on College Campuses

by Elisabeth Kalomeris, Undergraduate Student
Undergraduate Honorable Mention — Student Engagement Essay Challenge

Awareness is only as useful as the action it inspires. Key actors who are committed to change drive awareness. These committed few are like radio towers, broadcasting their cause within their radius of influence, attaining not only more listeners, but also moving others to become “broadcasters” themselves. Many people become passionate about a cause because it has affected their lives personally. Important issues that do not touch our lives directly, like neglected tropical diseases (NTDs), do not have the same network of broadcasters for that reason. Therefore, focusing on fostering a smaller, core group of broadcasters—those who will be most active and committed to spreading change—will be the most effective in raising awareness to a broader network. This strategy will be even more effective because of the personal level on which broadcasters interact. In this essay, I will use an existing organization, Camp Kesem, as a model for creating an NTD-related organization. An NTD-focused philanthropic organization that has independent clubs on college campuses would not only raise awareness to campus-wide groups of young people at a formative age, but also nurtures groups of “broadcasters” who will have a long-term investment in NTDs. These individuals will gain experience with philanthropic organization and fundraising, learning the skills to turn passion into action.

This NTD-centered organization would be loosely modeled after organizations like Camp Kesem, a network of student-run summer camps with corresponding chapters at universities. When I arrived at Rice University, Camp Kesem had a major presence on campus. While I have never participated in the club, students go through a rigorous interview process to be selected as camp counselors and many go on to be on the executive board of their chapter. Camp Kesem was founded by students, but has since grown to have full-time staff and a board of directors at the national level. While this demonstrates the room for growth with student-run networks, the summer camps are still mainly staffed and organized by college students. An NTD-focused organization that supports college students in their efforts to start chapters at their own universities would allow for rapid horizontal expansion, with little effort or funds for initial start-up costs.

These smaller chapters could host a multitude of events to raise awareness and funding throughout the year. Members could inform their peers about the devastating effects of specific diseases under the NTD umbrella, such as onchocerciasis and schistosomiasis. Bringing awareness about a few of these NTDs in detail will foster greater understanding of the devastating effects of these treatable diseases as a whole. A campus club also has the ability
How Would You Raise Awareness of Neglected Tropical Diseases?

to inform students about the social factors surrounding many NTDs, which are still prevalent primarily because of lack of access to medical care and information.

In addition to continuous fundraising efforts and awareness campaigns for NTDs, an important fixture for an NTD philanthropy would be an annual mission. Chapters could finance a campus-wide scholarship that would select a student to learn more about NTDs over the summer. Many philanthropic clubs are perpetually raising money, but can easily lose motivation. Campus clubs are especially vulnerable when impassioned members, usually the founders, graduate. Having steady goals would be effective while the chapter is active, but provides little structure and few opportunities for growth within the club. An annual summer scholarship fund, no matter how small, is a visible goal that requires commitment and year-long planning. The students who organize this summer program would gain important skills, as well as deepen their investment in the club. The students who apply, whether it is for an actual program set up by the chapter or for a stipend dedicated to offset independent research or volunteerism, would gain a meaningful summer experience completing NTD-related work.

The most important function of the campus chapters in this hypothetical NTD organization would be to foster a young adult’s passion and ability for action in addressing NTDs. Participation would lead to a deeper commitment and understanding of NTDs. This group may attract some broadcasters—students who are already outspoken and attract others to their cause—but its most important function would be to create new broadcasters and endow them with the ability to translate concern for an issue into concrete change. An organization with autonomous chapters would have a ripple effect across the country. Not only would it be one of the quickest and cheapest ways to create an extended presence of NTD-awareness campaigns, but it also would effectively target those with time, resources, and drive to make change possible. College campuses are home to huge numbers of smart, dedicated students who are at a formative age. Not everyone continues to follow the same passions they did in college, but those who do may become some of the greatest agents of change.

Creating a nationwide network of philanthropic college clubs addressing NTDs is an efficient way to raise awareness and create lifelong leaders. College chapters are started and run entirely by students, making them a feasible and sustainable option for ongoing initiatives on campuses. Fundraising events centered around informing students about specific diseases under the NTD umbrella lead to a better understanding of the crippling effect of these preventable diseases and the social issues surrounding them. These clubs will also nurture NTD activists, who will broadcast their message to even more students. Adjustments to the original concept will surely be made, but the original outline is far less important than the broadcasters who will be growing with the organization.
Elisabeth Kalomeris is sophomore at Rice University studying psychology and public policy. Elisabeth, who is of Brazilian heritage, is fluent in Portuguese and conversant in Italian and German. She has spent several summers in Brazil, where she first learned about NTDs and their impact. She became interested in policy as a high school student in New York City. After learning more about the role of NTDs as a barrier to global health, she decided to become involved in the new chapter of the END7 campaign at Rice in the fall.
How Would You Raise Awareness of Neglected Tropical Diseases?
Combating NTDs through Early Education, Detection and Prevention: An Interactive Activity for Sixth-Grade Children

by Jennifer Gia-Linh Nguyen, D.M.D. candidate, and Emmy Sun, Undergraduate Student

Winner — Children’s Outreach Concept Challenge

Educating children about neglected tropical diseases (NTDs) through interactive role-play activities is an effective way to raise awareness about NTDs, encourage early detection and treatment for these diseases, and decrease transmission. NTDs are a group of diseases that severely affect the world’s “bottom billion.” Approximately one billion people are currently infected with one or more NTDs, while another billion are at direct risk of becoming infected. Encouraging early detection, treatment and prevention of NTDs is essential for reducing the socioeconomic burden of these diseases. Infection with soil-transmitted helminths, for example, impairs academic performance in young children, which can be reversed following detection of infection and deworming treatment.

Over the past two decades, there have been increasing incidences of NTDs reported in the United States, including Chagas disease, dengue fever and chikungunya. The target audience for our educational strategy is sixth-grade students living in the southern United States, where NTDs are endemic. Sixth-grade students are the ideal population because NTDs are common childhood infections and at this cognitive stage most students are capable of understanding and retaining basic concepts of disease symptoms and methods to prevent future transmission.

We created a sixth-grade lesson plan for a role-playing game to facilitate understanding of NTDs. For this activity, students are placed in groups of eight. In each group, four students will be the “doctors” and four students will be the “patients.” Each patient will be given one of four NTD “patient case sheets” featuring the external symptoms and how the patient acquired the NTD. For example, Chagas disease symptoms and factors contributing to contraction (e.g., poor hygiene or poor housing conditions) will be listed, supported by images of visible symptoms of the disease, such as Romaña’s sign (Bern et al. 2007). Each doctor group will have a “master package” of symptoms, risk factors and transmission prevention methods of all four NTDs. The four patients will each present their case to the doctor group, and members of the doctor group will attempt to “diagnose” the patient. The doctor group will then inform the patient of available treatments, risk factors and transmission prevention methods for that NTD. Next, the patient group and doctor group will swap sheets and rotate to their right within the classroom — so the patient becomes the doctor for the next round, and vice versa. The instructor has an answer key listing the correct NTD diagnosis for each patient. At the end of the activity, the instructor will review the answers with the entire class. Students will have eight minutes for each NTD case presentation and diagnosis. Total activity time is approximately 60 minutes.
This activity combines a variety of interactive learning methods, such as role-play/situational learning, problem-based/self-directed learning, collaborative learning and audio-visual learning. Research has found that interactive methods for teaching science topics increase lesson material retention when compared to traditional lecture-style teaching methods. The use of role-play/situational learning effectively encourages students to actively engage in the lesson material, keeping students interested. Placing students in a theoretical situation with self-directed learning, where they must problem-solve, further reinforces lesson retention. Role-play and self-directed/problem-based learning also prepare students for future real-life situations where they may be in a similar role of patient or doctor, recognizing symptoms of NTD infection in themselves, or in a relative or peer. Participating in the doctor group provides students the opportunity to actively discuss the lesson material with one another, engaging in peer teaching; this further consolidates understanding of the material. Collaborative learning also provides additional motivation for students to actively engage in the lesson. Additionally, reading aloud and discussing NTD symptoms and diagnoses accommodates students who learn better through hearing the lesson material. Visual learning through images of external NTD symptoms also provides a memorable way for students to better envision and retain lesson concepts.

We believe this interactive educational activity will promote awareness of NTDs among youth and engage students in learning more about these diseases. Discussion of NTDs in the classroom will also aid in correcting misconceptions and reducing stigma associated with these diseases. After this activity, students will also learn how to decrease risk of NTD contraction and/or transmission. Similar educational outcomes success has been seen among youth after gaining increased awareness of sexually transmitted disease symptoms and transmission. Other anticipated outcomes include children playing a more engaged role in encouraging others to seeking earlier treatment of NTDs, as well as decreased transmission of NTDs through changes in lifestyle (e.g., more regular use of shoes outdoors in areas endemic with soil-transmitted helminths).

Because NTDs are endemic in the United States and yet often go undetected, raising awareness among youth is a critical step in helping control proliferation of NTDs in the Americas. Youth can play a large role in helping identify NTD cases and decrease the spread of these diseases; early identification of NTD symptoms and medical treatment can help decelerate the progression of chronic symptoms and decrease the socioeconomic impact of these diseases on individuals’ lives. This interactive educational activity strategically uses a variety of learning methods to accommodate different learning styles, promoting student understanding and long-term retention of lesson material. In this way, effective teaching strategies can play a huge role in engaging students to truly learn and retain lesson concepts on NTDs throughout their lives, recognizing NTD symptoms and helping decrease NTD transmission.
**Figure 1.** Sixth-grade lesson plan for a role-playing game to facilitate understanding of NTDs

The full version of these materials is available for use at [www.bakerinstitute.org/NTD-Outreach](http://www.bakerinstitute.org/NTD-Outreach).

Master Package of Symptoms

Answer Key

Patient Case Sheets
Jennifer Nguyen is a doctor of dental medicine (D.M.D.) candidate at the University of Sydney in Australia. She completed her bachelor of science with a specialization in biology and a major in East Asian Studies at Western University in Canada. She is currently a member of the North American Coordinating Committee for the international nonprofit Universities Allied for Essential Medicines (UAEM), and is a founding member of the UAEM chapter at Western University. Nguyen’s work with UAEM introduced her to NTDs, and she has since led youth-driven educational and advocacy initiatives to raise awareness of these diseases and the need for increased innovative research and development for NTD treatments. As a D.M.D. candidate, Nguyen is also interested in oral health and noncommunicable diseases (NCDs). She hopes to use her experience with UAEM, NTDs and NCDs to draw a larger picture of the need for increased attention to neglected areas in global health and to further engage youth in taking action to address inequities in access to health care.

Emmy Sun is pursuing a bachelor of medical sciences at Western University in Canada. Sun is a member of the Universities Allied for Essential Medicines and the World Health Organization Neglected Tropical Diseases (UAEM–WHO NTD) working group. She is also a member of the UAEM chapter at Western University, where she first recognized the need for neglected tropical disease education and advocacy. She continues to pursue her passion for global health, and engage her peers in the effort to improve the equitability and accessibility of health care.

References


