



Report on activities for 2020

Summary

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Fungi are silent killers, causing the death of over 2 million people every year - this makes fungal disease one of the top global causes of death ahead of TB and malaria. Vulnerable people from countries in the global south are disproportionately affected and those afflicted with fungal disease live in misery due to morbidity, the inability to work and stigma. Limited diagnosis and poor measurement of disease morbidity means that the true scale of the problem is unknown.

GAFFI has been almost the only global voice for fungal diseases in terms of public and global health since 2013. GAFFI estimates that with more widely available diagnosis and treatment, the number of deaths could go down to below 750,000.

GAFFI's strategy was revised with a new emphasis on strong partnerships to:

1. Actively advocate for Essential Diagnostics and Antifungals to be accessible in each country as part of Universal Healthcare;
2. Empower and expand GAFFI's Ambassadors, starting in Africa and Latin America;
3. Develop an open access data centre on the burden of the most serious fungal disease; and
4. Facilitate development of AI support products for diagnosis in resource- and healthcare worker-poor countries.

- GAFFI organized and lead the world's first conference on **fungal diseases and health systems** in Lima, Peru with PAHO and CDC and the report was issued on July 1st 2020. This meeting, in Spanish, was attended by 18 Latin American and Caribbean countries and developed a 7-point plan to adopt the latest diagnostics for fungal diseases and integrate these within HIV/AIDS, TB and hospital programs. The meeting also addressed antifungal drug resistance (AMR) and the new GLASS program on collecting data on resistance in *Candida* spp.

- **Burden of Serious Fungal Diseases:** Six more country burden of fungal disease papers were published including Republic of Congo, Cote d'Ivoire, Kuwait, Oman, Netherlands, and China. The first annual global incidence estimate of **fungal keratitis** was published - 1.05-1.40 million eyes affected, most that go blind. The first global estimate of **invasive aspergillosis incidence complicating chronic obstructive pulmonary disease** was published -750,000 – 2,200,000. An estimate of the number of children with hair fungal infection (tinea capitis) in Africa was published – 138 million affected.

- The WHO accepted inclusion of ***Aspergillus* antigen, Aspergillus antibody** and **Pneumocystis PCR** as **Essential Diagnostics** onto the 3rd Model List of in vitro Diagnostics, following GAFFI's application.

- **Diagnostic Laboratory Hub in Guatemala:** Among newly diagnosed HIV patients, 52.1% of the deaths were directly attributable to histoplasmosis, tuberculosis or cryptococcosis. At the Clínica Familiar Luis Angel Garcia (CFLAG), the biggest HIV health care facility in the network, a remarkable fall in mortality from 25% in 2017 to 16.6% in 2019 was shown. COVID-19 lead to a fall in diagnostic samples fell 38% between March and August 2020, coincident with a rise in mortality from opportunistic infections by 10.7% to 27.3% compared with 2019.

- **Fungal NTDs:** New maps of mycetoma and endemic fungal infections were published.

- **GAFFI's Ambassadors' activities:** Multiple educational programs and awareness have been delivered in Indonesia, India, Serbia, Hungary, France, Norway, Portugal, Nigeria, Cameroon, Ghana and South Africa.