

Novartis and Red Cross partner to tackle chronic diseases in refugee populations ^[1]

Publish Date: 06 April 2016 17:30 CEST

Syrian refugees in Lebanon suffering from chronic diseases face difficulties accessing diagnosis, medicines and ongoing care. The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and Novartis are partnering to improve care and treatment for the most vulnerable population in Lebanon. The objective is to establish a blueprint for improving diagnosis, treatment and follow-up of refugees and Lebanese suffering from chronic diseases.

[Video of Novartis and the International Red Cross partner to provide medicines to Syrian refugees](#)

Novartis will provide medicines for high blood pressure and diabetes, diseases that together account for more than 50% of deaths in Lebanon every year. The medicines are being supplied through [Novartis Access](#) ^[2], a program that focuses on affordability and availability of on- and off-patent medicines addressing key noncommunicable diseases. The portfolio of medicines is offered to governments and public-sector healthcare providers in lower and lower-middle-income countries at a price of USD 1 per treatment per month.

“Noncommunicable diseases are on the rise, not only in the Middle East but worldwide,” said [Rodolfo Rossi](#) ^[3], health coordinator at the ICRC in Lebanon. “This will give the ICRC the opportunity to receive drugs for noncommunicable diseases at a very preferential price, allowing us to include more patients.”

The ICRC is working in Lebanon to help patients affected by the most common chronic diseases. Half of the population in Lebanon does not have any type of health coverage and the refugee crisis has placed a significant extra burden on medical facilities already struggling to provide basic levels of healthcare.

Refugees are at particular risk of dying from strokes and heart attacks because managing chronic disease requires early detection and long-term treatment. With a migrant population of more than one million people who have fled the fighting in Syria, refugees now account for about one-third of Lebanon’s population.

Rodolfo Rossi of the ICRC and Harald Nusser of Novartis Access discuss the value of global partnerships for health and humanitarian impact on the Red Cross blog. [Read the full interview](#) ^[3]

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[3] <http://blogs.icrc.org/gphi2/2016/04/06/noncommunicable-diseases-how-are-icrc-and-novartis-tackling-this-issue-together/>