



**OPERATIONAL
RESEARCH
SNAPSHOT**

High Caseload of Scabies Among Rohingya Refugees

Scabies, a highly contagious skin infestation, poses a significant public health challenge in overcrowded refugee settings.

In Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh, home to over 1.1 million Rohingya refugees, living conditions including inadequate water and sanitation facilities create an ideal environment for scabies transmission.

Since late 2021, MSF observed unprecedented numbers of scabies cases.

Using routinely collected data from two MSF clinics, this study describes epidemiological patterns across age groups and camps, highlighting substantial burden, overcrowding-related transmission, and notable proportions of secondary infections.





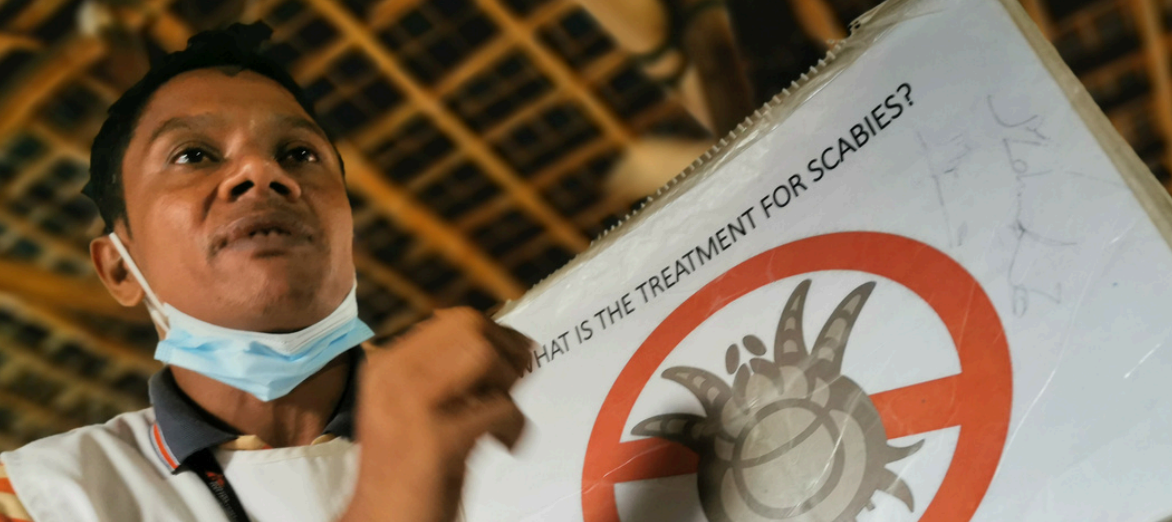
A total of 178 922 scabies consultations occurred, with women representing most cases and children forming a significant proportion across age groups.



Most patients presented with simple scabies, while one in five had secondary infections, underscoring substantial clinical severity and treatment needs.



A large community-wide treatment campaign using ivermectin was started to quickly reduce scabies cases after very high infection rates were found.



Key takeaways

Improved scabies prevention and treatment strategies are urgently required, especially in overcrowded refugee settings where transmission risk and clinical burden remain high.

Some of them include launching mass drug administration campaigns when prevalence surpasses 10%, improving WASH infrastructure, strengthening community engagement.

Original study: Bahaa Aldin Alhaffar et al. " High caseload of Scabies amongst Rohingya refugees in Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh: A retrospective analysis of the epidemiological and clinical characteristics of cases, July 2022 to November 2023", [journals.plos.org]

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Pictures: MSF/Malvoisin, Farah Tanjee/MSF, Maliha Tabassum/MSF

