

My Friends at the Hospital

FUNDACIÓN
LUCÍA

May





My Friends at the Hospital

Illustrated by May

FUNDACIÓN LUCÍA

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My name is Lucia, and ever since I was a little girl I have had to go to see the doctor at least once every three months. Because I go so often, I now have some friends there. Some of them work there and others are patients like me.

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Today before I see my doctor, I want to go and say hello to Gemma. She is a teacher at the school in the hospital. I want to tell her that on my last report card I got very good grades at school.

A few months ago I had to stay in the hospital for a couple of days, and unfortunately this was at the same time as test time at school and I failed some of them. But Gemma has helped me improve my grades since then.



After visiting Gemma I saw Luis in the waiting room. I'm so happy to see him again because he's changed his doctor. Now he goes saw to another one for adults, and I'm still with the paediatrician.

4 My friend Luis is infected with HIV like me, but he is also a haemophiliac and needs special medical treatment. When he was born he needed some blood transfusions, and that's how he got infected with HIV.



Another friend of mine is Sam. She is the same age as I am. She is very funny and pretty too; she has such big black eyes.

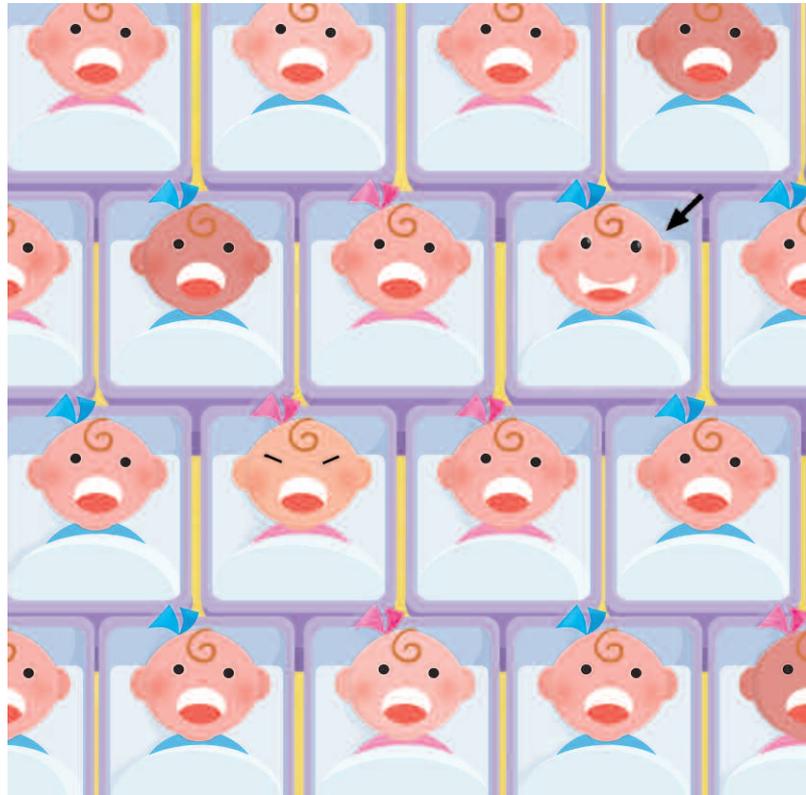
- 6 Sam lives with her aunt. She explained to me that her mom got infected with HIV when she used to take drugs and share needles with other people. Then when she was pregnant she didn't know that she was HIV-positive. That is how my beautiful friend Sam got HIV.



8 At the doctor's office I also see Anna. She doesn't have any parents and lives with her grandparents. She is very good looking and is going to be 19 soon.



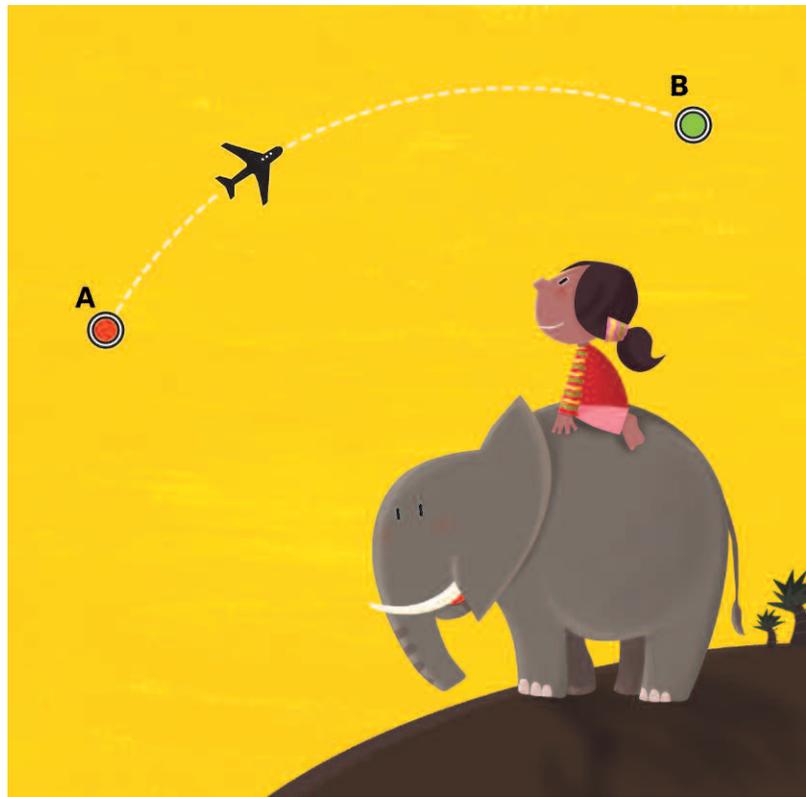
Then there's Marti. He is such a beautiful baby! He is only five months old and spends all day sleeping and eating. I like the smell of his skin a lot. His mom is infected with HIV but she took some antiretroviral medicine during her pregnancy and didn't transmit the infection to Marti.



Some times I also see Desirée. She was born in Africa, but because they don't have much medicine there her parents brought her here so she could receive all the medical help she needs.

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When she first arrived she was only with her dad because her mom decided to stay in Africa for a little while. But now the family lives all together here, and Desirée is doing much better.

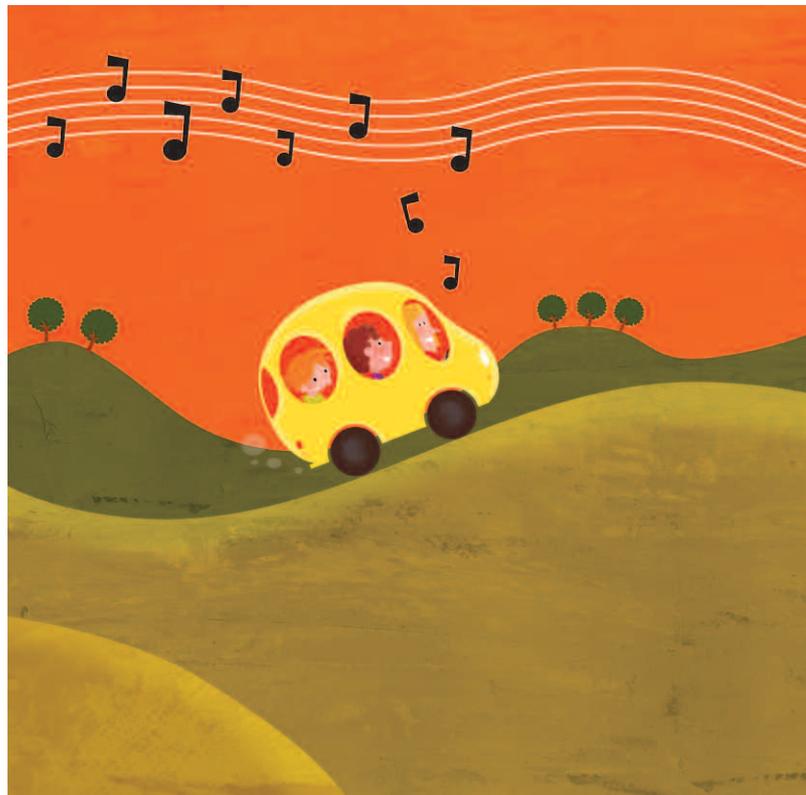


Wow, there is Joel and Maica.

Today it was impossible for Joel's parents to come with him to the hospital, so that's why he came with a volunteer. Her name is Maica.

14 Maica went to Joel's house and brought him here. Afterwards she will take Joel back to school. She is a really wonderful lady.

Some boys and girls with this infection do special activities like picnics, day trips and summer camps. Joel knows Maica very well, so when these activities happen he always wants her to be his counsellor.



Today, I also got to see Carles and Màrius, the guy who takes care of him. Carles doesn't have grandparents, and his parents can't take care of him either. That's why he lives in a children's shelter with other boys, girls and counsellors. They are like a big family.



Talking about my friends at the hospital always makes me miss Glòria. She was about my age. She used to make jokes and loved to sing songs. She was very funny, but she doesn't come any more. She will always live on in my heart.



As I told you, every three months I have to go to the hospital. And I know that whenever I go there I will find friends, nurses and doctors, and also other boys and girls who have HIV like me.





ACTIVITIES

- 1 Make a list with the names of your best friends.
- 2 Answer:
 - Do you have a friend who is sick?
 - What disease does he or she have?
 - Does he or she take any medicine?
- 3 Look up the word "haemophilia" in the dictionary to find out what it means, and then write the meaning down.
- 4 How did Luis and Sam get infected?
- 5 Search for information on antiretroviral medication and explain what is.
- 6 What is a children's shelter?

NOTE FOR TEACHERS

These stories are written to explain to children between 7 and 13 years of age what is known about the HIV infection and AIDS: its origins; how it is thought that new pathogens appeared affecting humans; the transmission channels of this disease; the measures to prevent it, and also its clinical, social and emotional treatments.

These stories do not correspond to the story of the real Lucia who gave her name to the Foundation.

Here are some additional aspects to take into consideration:

- 1 Since some of the topics covered in these stories are difficult for children to understand, we recommend the participation of an adult to lead the reading and clarify and comment on any questions.
- 2 The stories take place here, in Spain. Thanks to access to treatment, the quality of life for infected persons is generally good in general, but this circumstance varies around the world. There are many countries where HIV infection means certain death in a short time period.
- 3 The treatments described in these stories are the same ones that were available when they were written. But other, more complicated treatments are being developed, and we hope that these treatments will be able to improve current ones.
- 4 One of the main aims of these stories is to diminish the social stigma surrounding the disease and the people infected with it via an objective approach based on information.
- 5 All stories were written to give answers and work on different questions when children ask to talk about these topics.

This material was developed to support adults when they talk with children about HIV infection. For children in general, the material is a basic tool of information and knowledge towards preventing infection. For affected children, there are stories that can be read before their own diagnosis or a family member's diagnosis is known: the second story, "How Does My Body Work?", the fourth story, "Visiting the Hospital", the fifth story, "Trusting and Sharing" and the sixth story, "A Normal Day". All these stories are very useful for answering questions that children may ask when the topic is discussed with freedom.
- 6 All stories contain a minimum of 5 exercises for afterthought and consolidating knowledge.

1 The Family

We all have a family and a history.

2 How Does My Body Work?

Anatomical and physiological concepts necessary to better understand how to take care of our health and practice good prevention.

3 The History of HIV

This story goes over the origins of this new infection, the discovery of the pathogen that causes it and its transmission channels.

4 Visiting the Hospital

To have a good understanding of our health, it is necessary that we have periodic check-ups.

5 Trusting and Sharing

Due to social rejection, infected people have a right to intimacy in order to avoid discrimination and mistreatment. It is important to mention that if this is taken to the extreme, it can cause loneliness, because we all need each other and need to relate with one another. In life it is always important to evaluate with whom you can and want to share your secrets.

6 A Normal Day

The daily activities of a child who takes medication are different, and like all children they sometimes have more needs than adults do.

7 My Friends at the Hospital

The lives of people who are infected with HIV are affected by many realities, all of which have been taken into consideration here.

8 Medication

This story explains drug mechanisms to hinder the progression of the disease, as well as the need to use different types of drugs.

9 The Future

A future with hope is life's bond. This story explains how infected children make their plans for the future, as well as the most common questions they ask.

10 Children's Rights

This section is on the vulnerability of children and young people, and their rights.

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