



“Assessing Use of the Binational Health Card for Tuberculosis Among Patients in the San Diego-Tijuana Border Region”

A qualitative study by Alicia Riley
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Background

Binational TB Referral and Case Management Project (2003)



- Binational TB Card:
 - To help TB patients who move across the border maintain **continuity in their treatment**
 - Binational commitment to “help Card-holders **without risk to legal status** and rights”


Research Objective

How are patients in the San Diego-Tijuana border region using the Binational Health Card?



Methods

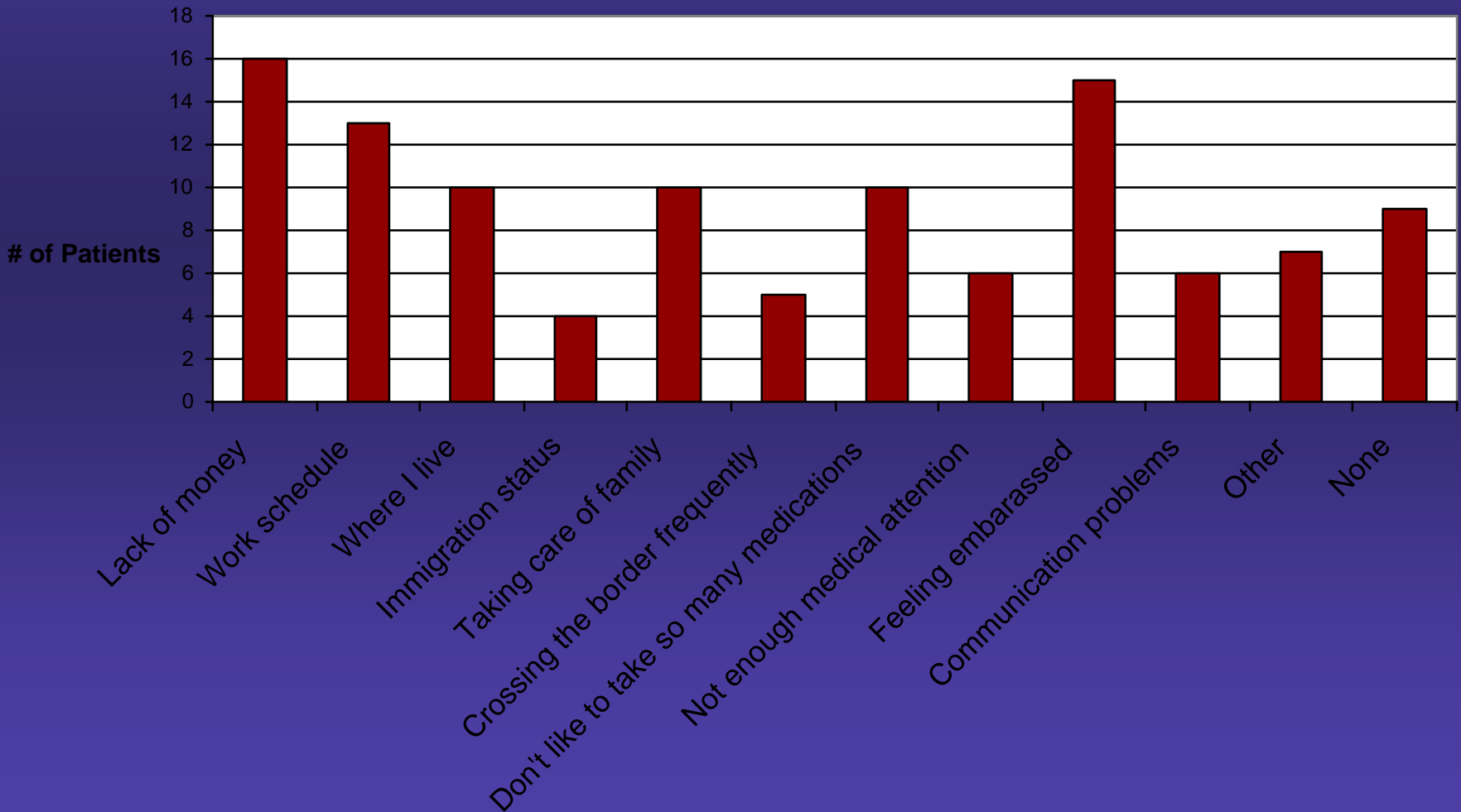
- Structured interviews with **43** active TB patients
- Most were Card-holding patients in treatment in Tijuana
- Inquiries: Card use, border crossing, perceived obstacles to treatment
- Treatment outcome data gathered 6 months after interviews



QuickTime™ and a
TIFF (Uncompressed) decompressor
are needed to see this picture.

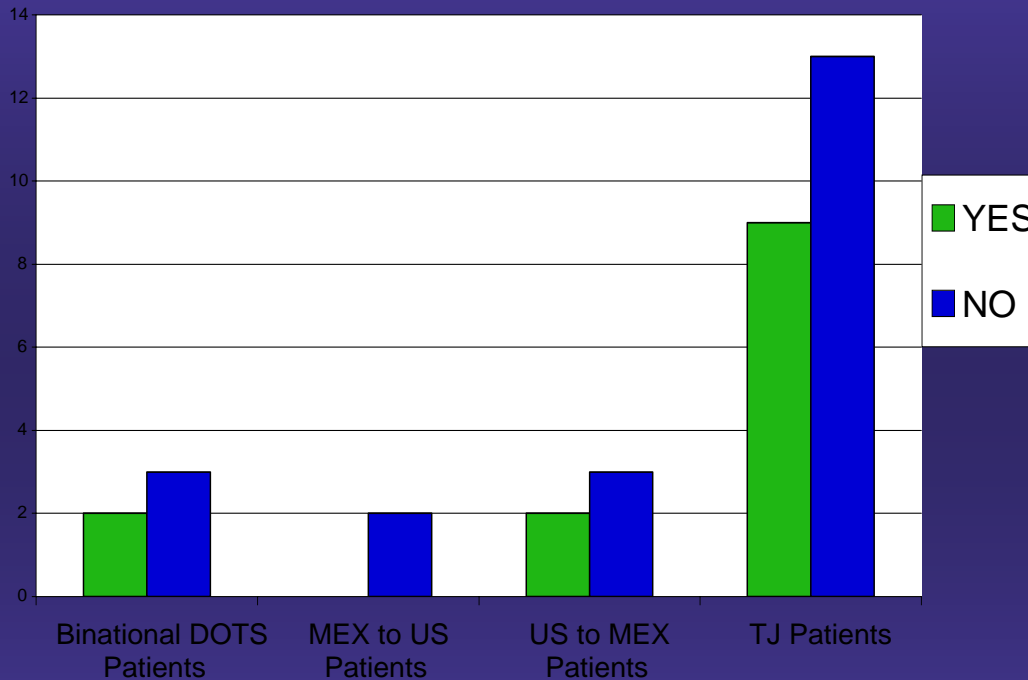
Descriptive Findings

Obstacles to Treatment Completion (self-reported)



Descriptive Findings ₂

Has Card Been Used By Card Holders?



How These Patients Use the Card:
8 ~ To verify my treatment info during medical appointments

vs.

1 ~ To continue my treatment after crossing to the U.S.

1 ~ To continue my treatment after crossing to Mexico

If patients are NOT using the Card for cross-border treatment continuation, why is satisfaction so high?

Qualitative Propositions

Card as a Security Blanket

“Because it is a record that is over there in a computer and they know perfectly, everything about me. That’s why I give it a 10. (chuckle)”

Card as a Status Symbol

“Yes, I carry it all of the time, just like my Green Card.”

Card as a Reason to Cross

“And now that I have the Card, it’s a shame I haven’t gone to the U.S.”

Additional Trends

- Need to be well before going to the U.S.
- Lack of information about TB, the disease, causes hardship

“When you go to the hospital for the first time, you go with a certain amount of fear. You don’t have any preparation ... I deserted my treatment in 1993 because it complicated my existence. I looked at TB, like a woman who looks at an unwanted child.... What I think about TB now from my experiences - it’s not actually contagious when there is real information available on how to prevent it.”

Conclusions

Card was not being used for treatment continuation after border crossing by surveyed TB patients in treatment in Tijuana

BUT there are unintended benefits of the Card:

- Sense of security for patients
- Patients feel more responsibility and control in their treatment and are more invested.
- Opportunity for health education

Implications



1. Empower patients with education about TB, the disease
2. Clarify a binational protocol, strengthen political commitment with funds, and improve communication at all levels
3. Develop an electronic database of Card-holding patients, accessible by health providers on both sides of the border.
4. Model for other diseases and mobile populations

Limitations

- Non-randomized participant selection
- Small sample size
- Possible acquiescent response bias
- No inclusion of Card-holding TB positive ICE detainees in San Diego

Acknowledgements

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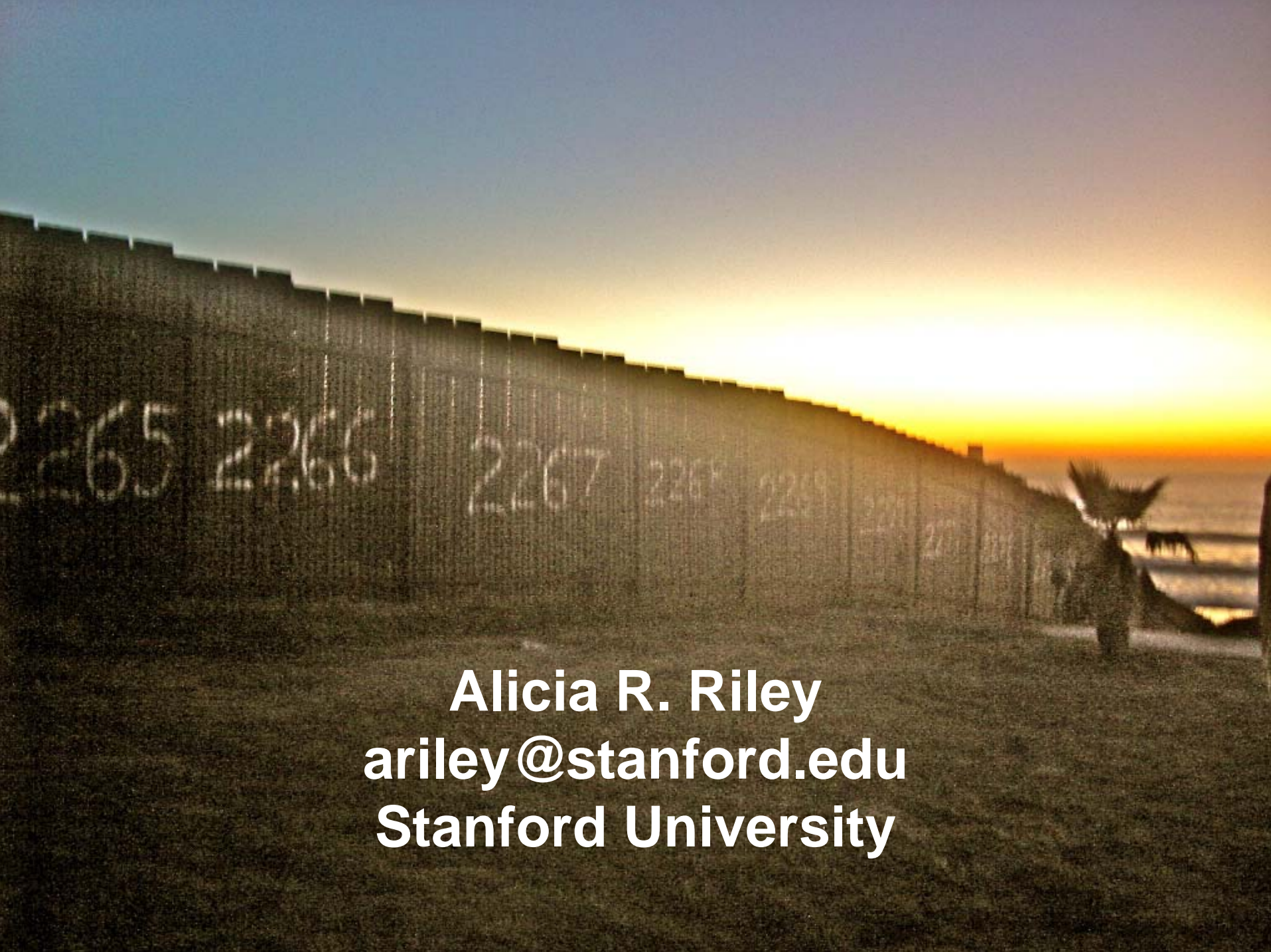
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And most importantly, to the patients who
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Treatment Outcome Data

Card Possession:	Completed treatment	Continuing treatment	Abandoned treatment	Died	Treatment failed	Moved Across Border	Total
No Card	2	1	1	0	0	1	5
Card Possessor	17	4	6	1	1	1	30
Does not know	1	0	0	0	0	0	1

No apparent difference made by Card-possession, but sample too small to say anything conclusive