

1. INTRODUCTION

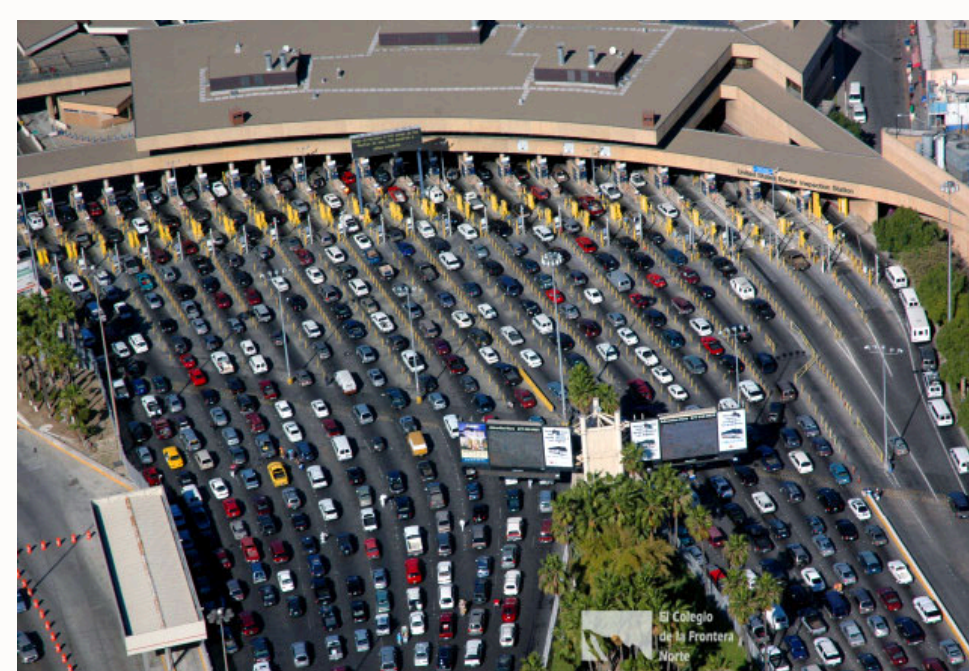
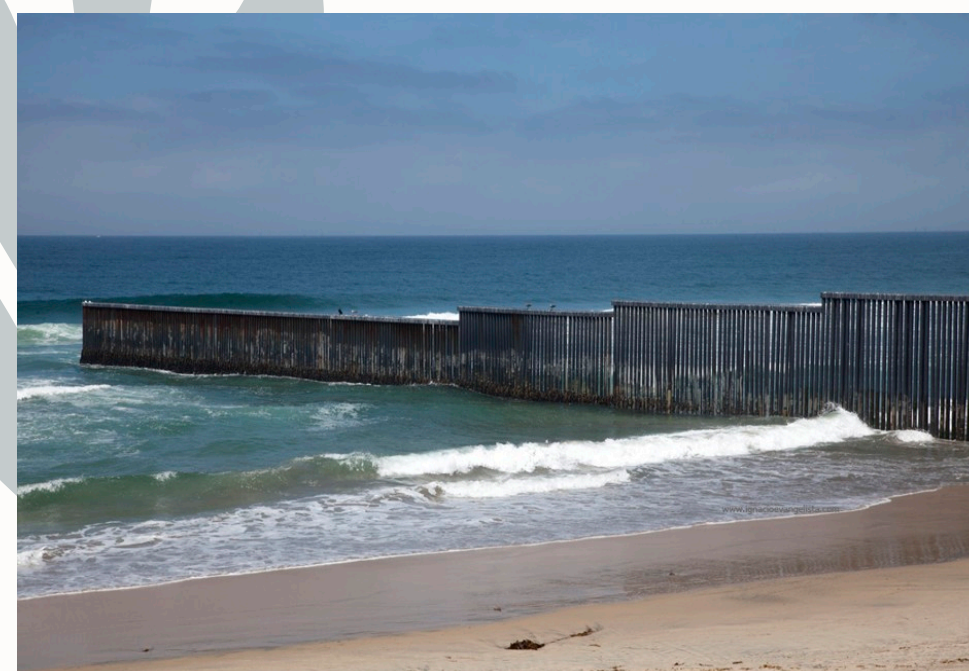
Purpose

- To determine what are the underlying sociocultural and economic causes for the high prevalence and incidence of teenage pregnancies in Tijuana, Mexico.

Questions of Interest

- How do sexually active adolescents negotiate sex, gender dynamics, and use of contraceptive methods with their partners?
- What is preventing sexually active adolescents from using contraceptive methods?

2. BACKGROUND



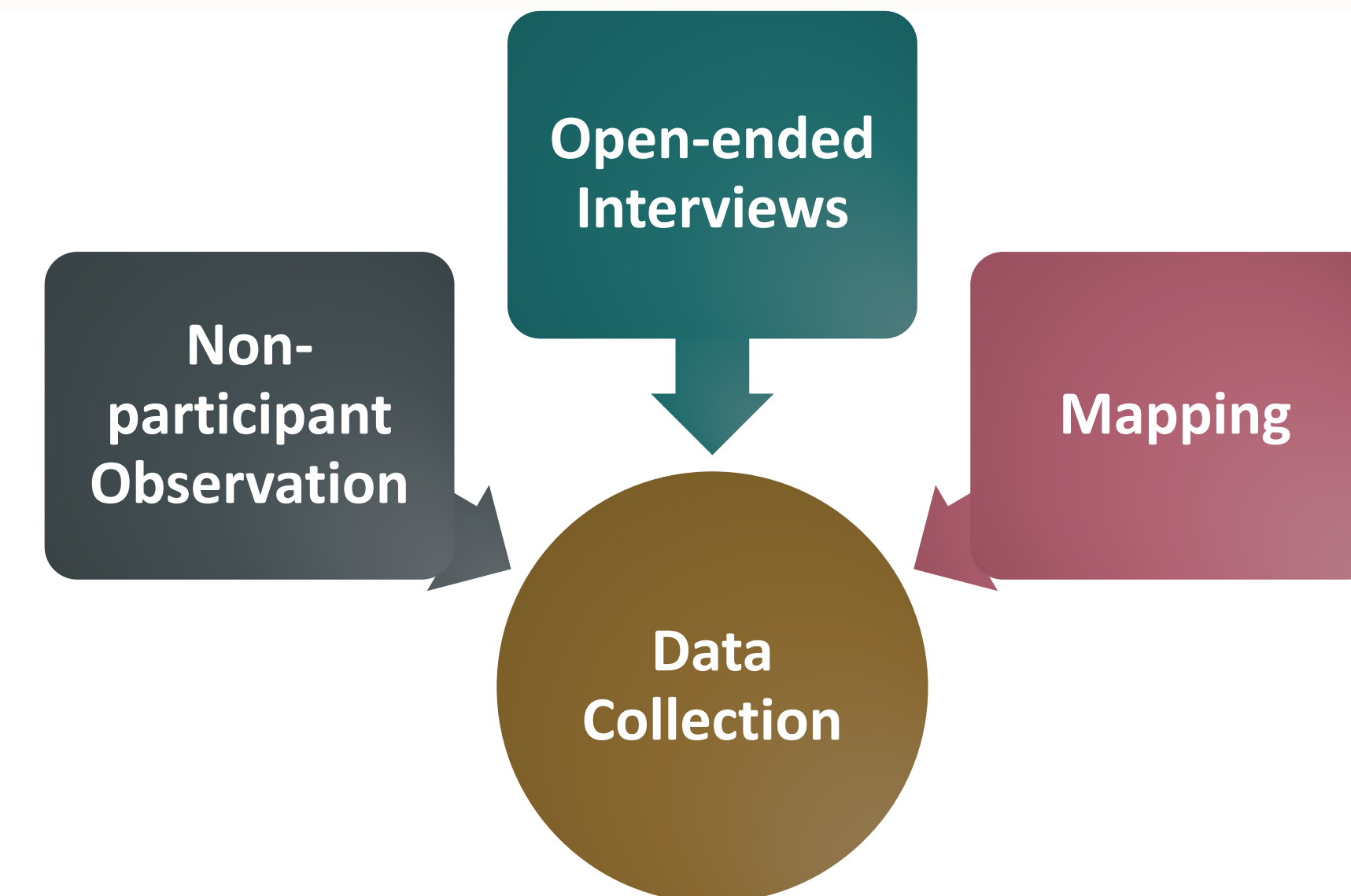
- Baja California is the northernmost and westernmost of Mexico's 31 states. It is bordered on the west by the Pacific Ocean; on the east by the state of Sonora, the state of Arizona, and the Gulf of California (Sea of Cortez); on the south by Baja California Sur; and its northern limit is the state of California.⁵
- Tijuana is the largest city in Baja California, and the 5th largest of Mexico. It shares with San Diego, California the busiest international border in the world – over 50 million people cross the border annually.^{5,6}
- Due to its proximity with the United States and the economic growth experienced by the border region, Tijuana attracts thousands of Mexicans from all over the country. Its economy is largely dependent on tourism and being a manufacturing center.⁵
- Over the last 12 years, there has been an increase in the number of teenage pregnancies, primarily due to the onset of sexual activity at an increasingly earlier age.⁸
- Currently, about 33% of monthly obstetric cases seen in local hospitals correspond to women under the age of 19.⁹

3. METHODS

Preliminary Research:

- Conducted a literature review that covered information about Tijuana's current state of affairs – economic, political, sociocultural, geographic, and public health

Methods Used to Collect Data:



Non-participant Observation

- Observed interns, residents, attending physicians, nurses, and receptionists in the Obstetrics and Gynecology Department of the IMSS - Hospital Regional No. 1
- Field notes were recorded while shadowing at the hospital's OB/GYN Emergency Room
- Done in 4-6 hour work shifts

Open-ended Interviews

- Engaged care/service providers in casual, open-ended conversations in between patients
- Providers were questioned about: 1.) The hospital's patient population; 2.) Their respective roles in the medical encounter; 3.) What they ask the patients during their part of the encounters; 4.) What they discuss about with their sexually active teenage patients - pregnant or not pregnant

Mapping

- Used to obtain information about the institution's facilities and structure
- Sketched on paper the orientation and distribution of spaces
- Documented the following information: 1.) How people occupied space in the hospital; 2.) Their movement throughout these different spaces; 3.) The interactions between care/service providers and the patients, as well as between different providers



4. KEY FINDINGS

1. The number of teenage pregnancies in Tijuana has been, and continues to be on the rise, despite national health campaigns

2. The pattern of teenage pregnancy is often repeated. a.) Individual women might have >1 pregnancy during their teenage years; b.) Their children grow to become teenage parents

3. There is the social belief – including among health care providers - that teenage pregnancies are due to "ignorance" and lack of sexual education

4. Every patient is provided with thorough information about contraceptive methods, their pros/cons, and which one would best suit them

5. The regional hospital (HR7), originally intended for reproductive health – Family Medicine and OB/GYN – has progressively decreased its patient population

6. Tijuana has grown towards the south and east, significantly increasing the population of women who seek care at IMSS – HR1

5. DISCUSSION

- Although high incidence and prevalence of teenage pregnancies had historically presented in poorer states like Chiapas, Oaxaca, Guerrero, and Puebla - all in Southern Mexico - now, those levels are increasing in northern states such as Baja California (of which Tijuana is part).³
- The National Population Council (CONAPO) launched a nationwide health campaign in 2013 aimed at addressing the public issues of teenage pregnancies and sexually transmitted infections (STIs).^{3,9}
- The children of teenaged parents have higher probability of becoming teenage parents themselves.^{8,9}
- No doubt lack of knowledge about contraceptive methods plays an important role. However, the more significant problem seems to be, that even when sexual education is provided, it is deficient.^{2,7,9}
- In addition, there is an absence of a social culture that legitimizes the provision of sexual education and the usage of contraceptive methods in teenagers.^{1,2,5,7,8}



6. FUTURE DIRECTIONS

Research Goals

- To further explore the root causes (historical, social, cultural, environmental, economic, and political) of the high incidence and prevalence of teenage pregnancies in Tijuana, Mexico
- To develop culturally and linguistically appropriate tools that will assess: 1.) The extent of teenage pregnancies as a public health issue; 2.) Existing resources in Tijuana; and 3.) Gaps in the access teenagers have to available resources
- To determine the most appropriate intervention, complete its development, and implement it in partnership with IMSS – Hospital Regional No. 1
- To evaluate the effectiveness of the health intervention put into action

Next Steps

- Develop research proposal and submit for approval to the Internal Ethics Committee for IMSS - Hospital Regional No. 1
- Develop and submit research proposal for approval to the Rutgers-Robert Wood Johnson Internal Review Board
- Conduct ethnographic field work in Tijuana, Mexico during Global Health Rotation in M3 year, possibly M4 year as well

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