



Impact of COVID-19 on tuberculosis detection and treatment among migrants and non-migrants in Baja California, México

Raquel Muñiz-Salazar, Ph.D.
 Universidad Autónoma de Baja California. Ensenada,
 Baja California, México.

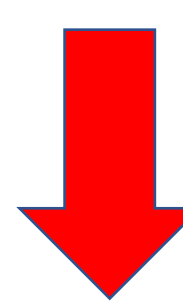
Richard S. Garfein, PhD, MPH
 University of California
 San Diego, CA, USA.



Baja California

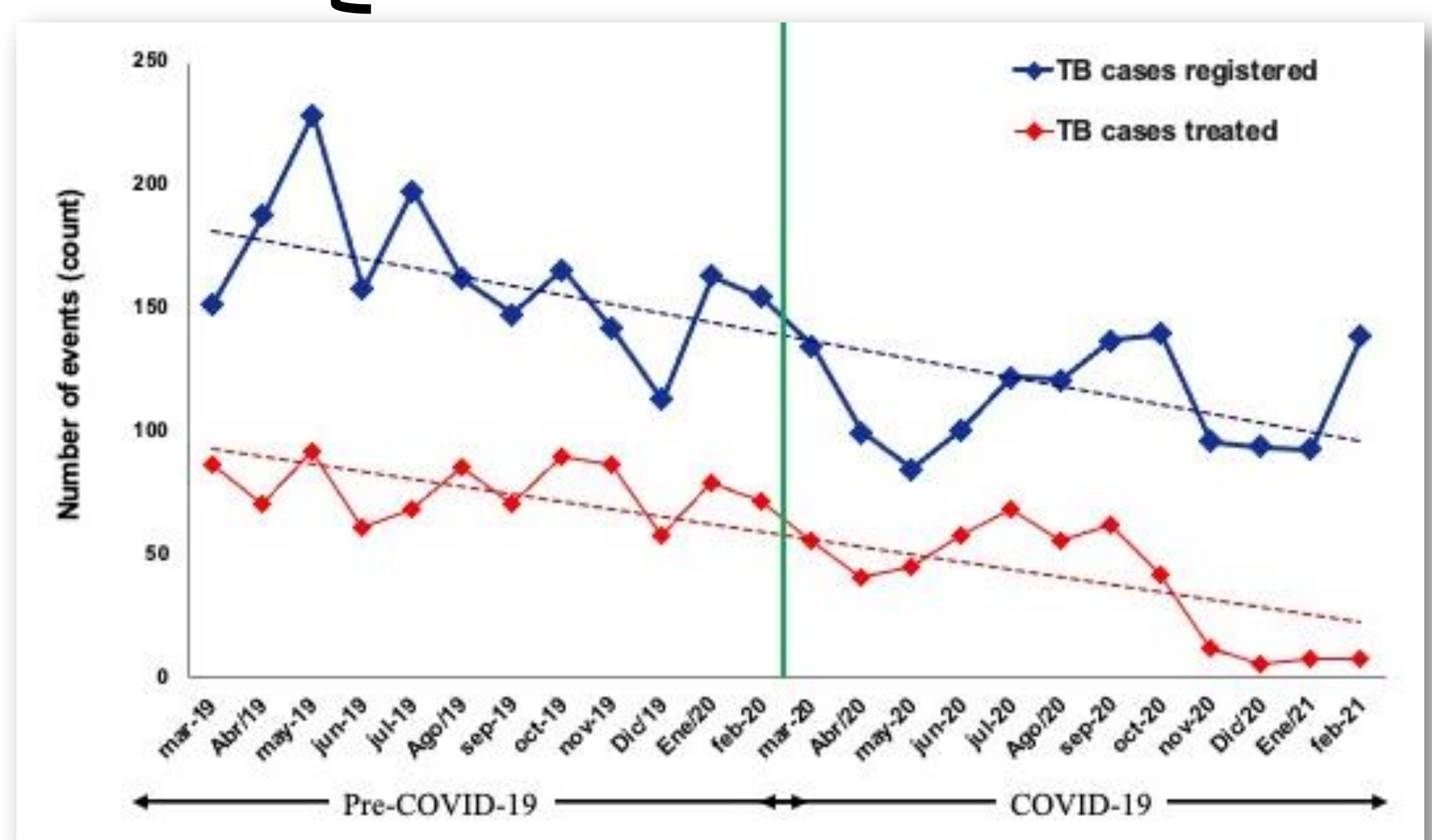
- Has the highest burden of TB in Mexico, with approximately 2,000 active cases annually.
- Has received migrants for decades, as migrants in transit, repatriated migrants, and recently, asylum seekers.

COVID-19 lockdown



30.9% TB cases registered

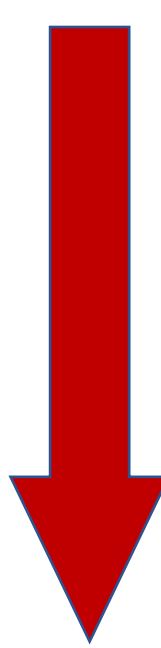
49.8 % Favorable TB outcomes



Monthly count of tuberculosis (TB) cases registered and favorable treatment outcomes (cured or treatment completed) in Baja California before and during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Focus group discussions and in-depth interviews were conducted on April 26th, 2021, to May 31st, 2021, with TB program officials and staff to describe how COVID-19 impacted TB services in Baja California

- Decreased case finding by promotoras and community outreach
- Delayed TB diagnosis
- Reduced availability of TB experienced HCW
- Limited access to TB supplies and services
- Loss to Follow Up
- Reduced number of TB clinics



- Increased telecommunication (VOT)
- Streamlined care process and reducing the burden on patients



Recommendations

Migrants

- TB Program in Baja California
 - 1% or 2%** of the total number of cases are **migrants**
- However, many of them, when they approach the services, are not perceived, or are not reported as migrants.

Participants estimate that..“many migrants do not go to health centers because they are afraid to be turned back or be detained at their destination”.
- Migrant caravans arrived at Tijuana (2019-2021)
 - no cases have been diagnosed through TB screenings.
- There are no differences** between migrant and non-migrant TB services and screening mentioned by focus group or in-depth interview participants.

- Improve clear communication of guidelines
- Develop prioritization of routine TB service delivery.
- Ongoing health education.
- Integrate TB and COVID-19 services.
- Maintain beneficial changes:
 - use of telemedicine (video observed therapy [VOT])
 - Streamlined process for initiating treatment for patients with drug resistant TB