Steffanie A. Strathdee  
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She is an infectious disease epidemiologist who has spent the last two decades focusing on HIV prevention in underserved, marginalized populations in developing countries and has published over 500 peer-reviewed publications. Currently, she leads a multidisciplinary team of research on HIV risk behaviors among drug users and sex workers on the Mexico-US border that incorporates public health with political science, law, and anthropology. In 2009, she and her team were awarded the Leadership Award in International Collaboration from the National Institute on Drug Abuse, who granted her a MERIT award. In 2012, she was given UCSD’s inaugural postdoctoral mentoring award and in 2013 received a mentoring award from the National Hispanic Science Network. Most recently, her research from Tijuana was featured in a book “Tomorrow is a Long Time” by Science magazine’s Jon Cohen (www.tomorrowisalongtime.com) and in an accompanying video documentary by UCTV (http://www.uctv.tv/shows/30004).  

Postcard from the Trenches: Tijuana’s Hidden Epidemics of HIV and Tuberculosis  

Just 20 minutes away from San Diego is Tijuana, Mexico, situated on the Mexico-US border. If the border were the 51st state, it would rank lowest in terms of health and social indicators. High levels of poverty, high levels of migration from southern Mexico and Central America, record numbers of deportations from the US, the quasi-legal sex trade, and Tijuana’s placement on a major drug trafficking route have created the conditions for the spread of infectious diseases, like HIV and TB among marginalized populations. Our team at UC San Diego has been studying HIV and related infections among injection drug users, sex workers and their clients in Tijuana for over a decade. We have shown that prevalence of HIV and TB in Tijuana is three times the national average, and that Mexico’s limited resources have compromised the ability to keep these infections in check. In response, our team has helped Mexican policymakers and non-governmental organizations advocate for additional resources for prevention and treatment. We have also developed the first binational, student-run clinic whereby medical students from UCSD and their counterparts from the Universidad Autonoma de Baja California train in the clinic for course credit and offer free care to Tijuana’s poor. This presentation describes the epidemiology of HIV and TB in Tijuana and what could be done to mount a binational response, told through the stories of several Tijuana residents.