A Tale of Twin Cities and One Insect-Borne Disease

Dengue fever is widespread in Asia, Africa, South and Central America, but not in the United States. Worldwide, 50-100 million infections occur yearly with 20,000 deaths, mainly children. No vaccine or cure currently exists. Even though the climate in the southern U.S. is suitable and the mosquito vector Aedes aegypti lives here, fewer people get dengue fever in the U.S. than in neighboring Mexico. Over a 10-year period, only 64 cases of dengue fever were confirmed in Texas, while 62,514 cases were reported in three adjoining Mexican states.

**Nuevo Laredo, Mexico** (Population: 280,000)

**Laredo, Texas** (Population: 280,000)

**Similarities**

- High transmission
- Fewer window screens & air conditioners
- More crowded
- More rainy season

**Differences**

- Minimal transmission
- More window screens & air conditioners
- Less crowded
- Less rainy season

Climate change can affect disease transmission, but in this case, scientists conclude that socioeconomic factors are more important in explaining why there is more dengue fever in Nuevo Laredo than in neighboring Laredo.

**Dengue Fever**

Symptoms:
- High fever, severe headache, red eyes, rash, and joint pain

Treatment:
- Bed rest
- Increased body fluids intake
- Pain medicine

Prevention:
- Use mosquito net

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