



Who Gets Authorship Credit for COSECSA Peer-reviewed Research?

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Introduction: The College of Surgeons of East, Central and Southern Africa (COSECSA), the largest sub-Saharan African (SSA) surgical training institution, celebrates 25 years in 2024 with training programs in 14 countries (<https://www.cosecsa.org>). Authorship fairness and ethics are relevant discussion

topics, particularly when researchers from high-income countries (HIC) collaborate with colleagues in less-resourced environments (LRE). Because of the vital role COSECSA plays in SSA surgery, a search of peer-reviewed literature was undertaken to find the number of COSECSA-related articles and ascertain who receives first- and senior-author status (2nd author sometimes considered senior).

Materials & Methods: The theme for the 2023 COSECSA conference was "Technology, Innovation & Surgical Care In Africa;" therefore, the search terms chosen were: "College of Surgeons of East, Central and Southern Africa (COSECSA) and Technology," "College of Surgeons of East, Central and Southern Africa (COSECSA) and Innovation," and "COSECSA." Respected and widely-used Western databases not requiring fees were searched: PubMed, PubMed Central, Google Scholar.

Results: The 3 search terms produced: PubMed—57; PubMed Central—197; Google Scholar--1845. Because PubMed Central articles are open access, PubMed Central results were used as a "sample of convenience" to collect author-affiliation articles. After removing articles that were literature searches or unrelated, 164 articles were analyzed:

- **56 (34%) -- LRE first authors**
- **22 (13%) -- No LRE authors**
- **30 (18%) -- First author from HIC, co-authors, LRE**
- **56 (34%) -- HIC first and senior authors -- 10 (6%) with LRE second author (considered senior author in some institutions)**

Conclusion: Two-thirds of collaborative publications report HIC authors as major contributors and 13% have no LRE authors at all.

Collaborative surgical research is impossible without essential input and support of colleagues from less-resourced environments (LRE). Future collaborations must establish LRE authorship equity -- at project inception -- in publications and academic presentations.

