

Gender Disparities in Student Surgical Societies: a Cross-Sectional Survey of five African Countries

You are invited to participate in a study titled “Gender Disparities in Student Surgical Societies: a Cross-Sectional Survey of five African Countries”. This study is jointly conducted by the following student surgical societies from across Africa:

1. **The Students’ Surgical Society**, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, Nigeria
2. **Intare Surgery Interest Group**, University of Global Health Equity, Kigali, Rwanda
3. **TUKS University Student Surgical Society**, University of Pretoria, Pretoria, South Africa
4. **Students Surgical Forum**, Kenya
5. **University of Rwanda Surgical Students’ Society**, University of Rwanda, Butare, Rwanda
6. **Makerere University Surgery Society**, Makerere University, Kampala, Uganda

This voluntary study aims to explore gender disparities and improve inclusivity in student surgical societies across Africa. Participation involves completing a 20-item questionnaire covering demographics, membership, leadership, experiences, challenges, career aspirations, and recommendations for addressing gender inequality.

Ethical approval was obtained from the Health Research Ethics Committee of the Ahmadu Bello University Teaching Hospital (ABUTH), Shika, Zaria, Nigeria.

All responses will remain strictly confidential, anonymized, and securely stored. By proceeding, you confirm your understanding of the study’s purpose, its voluntary nature, and the measures in place to ensure confidentiality.

For questions or concerns, please contact our research team at surgicalsocietyzaria@gmail.com

Do you agree to participate in this study? Yes No

SECTION A: Demographic Information

1. Sex:

- Male

- Female

2. Age: 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40.

3. Student Surgical Society:

- The Students’ Surgical Society, Zaria

- Students' Surgical Forum, Kenya
- Makerere University Surgery Society, Kampala
- Intare Surgery Interest Group, Kigali
- University of Rwanda Students Surgical Society, Butare
- TUKS University Student Surgical Society, Pretoria

SECTION B: Participation in Student Surgical Societies

4. How long have you been a Member of your student surgical society?

- Less than a year
- 1-2 years
- 3-4 years
- More than 4 years

5. What motivated you to join your student surgical society?

- Interest in Surgery as a Career
- Networking Opportunities
- Impact on Professional Growth
- Developing Surgical Skills
- Community Service and Outreach
- Learning from experienced surgeons
- Influence from mentors
- Influence from Peers
- Other

6. Do you feel confident expressing yourself or asking questions in your student surgical society meetings or events regardless of your gender?

- Always
- Often
- Rarely
- Never

7. How often do you participate in your society?

- Regularly
- Occasionally

- Rarely
- Never

SECTION C: Gender Equality / Equity in Student Surgical Societies

8. On a scale of 1 to 10, how would you rate gender equality within your student surgical society membership?

1 (Lowest), 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10 (Highest)

9. Have you experienced/ witnessed any gender bias in your student surgical society?

- Yes
- No

10. If Yes, can you kindly describe what happened?

11. Do you believe gender plays a role in leadership opportunities within your student surgical society?

- Yes
- No
- Not Sure

12. Do you feel your student surgical society has adequate programs to support its members irrespective of gender in achieving their goals?

- Yes
- No
- Not Sure

13. Which gender is underserved in your student surgical society?

- Male
- Female
- None

14. What type of support is necessary to improve gender equality/ equity in student surgical societies?

- Mentorship programs
- Equal representation in leadership roles
- Awareness campaigns on gender issues
- Gender-Sensitive Policies
- Equal access to opportunities

- Other

15. What are the main obstacles women face in your student surgical society?

- Gender bias and stereotypes
- Lack of role models and mentors
- Family or societal expectations
- Limited opportunities for networking or leaderships
- Unsupportive peers
- Other

SECTION C: Barriers and Challenges in Student Surgical Societies

16. Have you ever felt discouraged in pursuing a surgical career due to gender-related challenges?

- Yes
- No

17. Do you believe family responsibilities and personal life considerations impact female participation more than male participation in your student surgical society?

- Yes
- No
- Not Sure

18. What challenges have you faced as a member of your student surgical society?

- Lack of Mentorship
- Discrimination based on gender
- Limited time to participate in society activities
- Limited access to resources (e.g. Funding, Training)
- Limited access to events (e.g. Workshops, Observerships)
- Bias in Surgical Training Opportunities
- Limited University Support
- Dormancy of the Student Surgical Society

SECTION D: Feedback and Recommendations

19. What changes would you recommend in addressing gender inequalities in student surgical societies?

20. What additional support is needed to maintain gender equality in student surgical societies?