

Pediatric global health abstracts: Presented but not published

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Background: Most of the global childhood disease burden occurs in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs). However, there are massive relative deficits in the amount of research conducted and addressing childhood diseases in LMICs. If widely disseminated, research presented at conferences may increase context-specific evidence from LMICs to improve clinical care and public health intervention policies targeted at improving childhood survival in such settings.

Objective: To determine the frequency of nonpublication of presented pediatric global health abstracts and to identify factors associated with nonpublication. **Design/Methods:** We conducted a cross-sectional study of abstracts presented at seven major scientific conferences that reported pediatric research conducted in at least one LMIC from 2017, 2018, and 2019. The years were selected to provide 2.5 years to 4.5 years between the SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED conference and publication search. We used PubMed, EMBASE, and Google Scholar to search for publications with the same authors that reported the aims of the presented abstract with a censoring date of November 15, 2022. We created a Kaplan-Meier curve to determine the cumulative incidence of publication of pediatric global health abstracts. We used predetermined abstract-level factors and created a multivariable Cox proportional hazard model to identify factors associated with time to publication.

Results: A total of 8,105 abstracts were reviewed and 1,433 reported pediatric research conducted in LMIC settings. Approximately half (50.5%, n=729) and 42.5% (n=613) reported work conducted in sub-Saharan Africa and in lower-middle income countries respectively (Table). The median number of authors per abstract was 7 (interquartile range 4, 10). Publications were available for 32.8% (95% CI 30.4-35.3%) and 45.2% (95% CI 42.6-47.9%) of abstracts at 24 months and 48 months respectively (Figure). Abstracts from East Asia and Pacific, South Asia and sub-Saharan Africa were published sooner than those conducted in other regions; and randomized controlled trials were published sooner than cross-sectional studies. **Conclusions:** Fewer than half of pediatric global health abstracts were published in peer reviewed journals years after the conference presentation. Efforts are urgently needed to support the widespread and long-lasting dissemination of pediatric research conducted in LMICs presented as abstracts at professional conferences. Such efforts may lead to a more robust evidence base for guiding both clinical care and policy related to child health in LMICs.

Biography

Dr. Catherine Shari is a dedicated medical professional specializing in Emergency Medicine at the Muhimbili National Hospital–Mloganzila in Dar es Salaam, United Republic of Tanzania. With a strong commitment to acute and critical care.

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