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AUTHORSHIP INEQUALITIES IN A GLOBAL HEALTH RESEARCH INITIATIVE

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BACKGROUND

- The International epidemiology Databases to Evaluate AIDS (IeDEA) is a global consortium of researchers from low-, middle- and high-income countries in 7 regions established in 2006.
- IeDEA is a highly productive collaboration, having published over 1500 articles.
- We assessed gender and regional inequalities in publication rates and authorship position among articles published in 2007-2020 by the Southern Africa region (SA) of IeDEA.

METHODS

- **Aim:** To assess differences in authorship position (first and last versus central authorship) by gender and income level of country of affiliation.
- **Data:** Author names and affiliations were extracted from 313 published articles acknowledging IeDEA-SA funding. Author gender was assigned based on first names, using the US Social Security and Census databases. Country income levels were based on the World Bank classification. We recovered missing values by contacting corresponding authors by email.
- **Statistical analysis:** Generalized multinomial regression model with random intercept for authors. The authorship positions within an article were standardized by converting them into percentiles. First authorship corresponds to the 0 percentile and the last authorship corresponds to the 100th percentile. The other authorships are spaced equidistantly between the 0 and 100th percentile. In the analysis, first and last authorships are compared to central authorships (34th – 67th percentile).

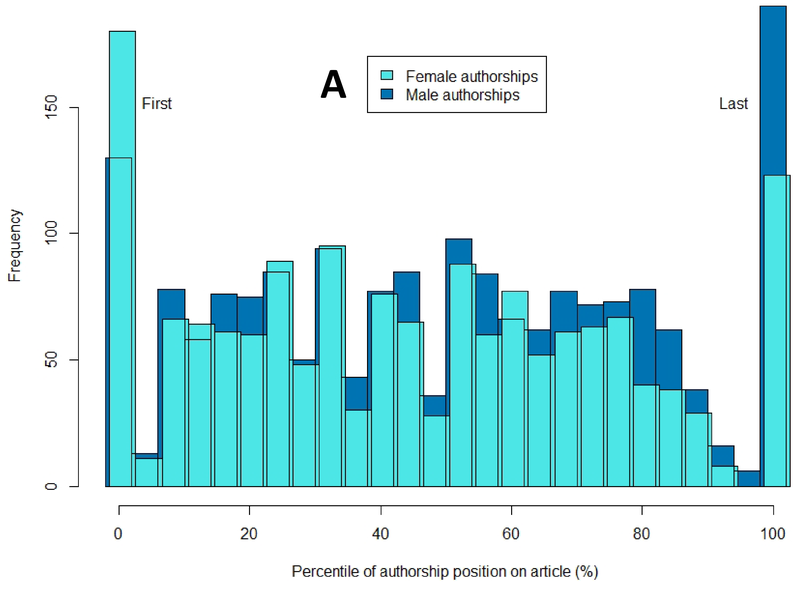
RESULTS

- Among a total of 1086 authors, 558 (51%) were female, 219 (20%) were from low-income countries (LIC), 269 (24%) from middle- (MIC), and 565 (52%) from high-income countries (HIC).

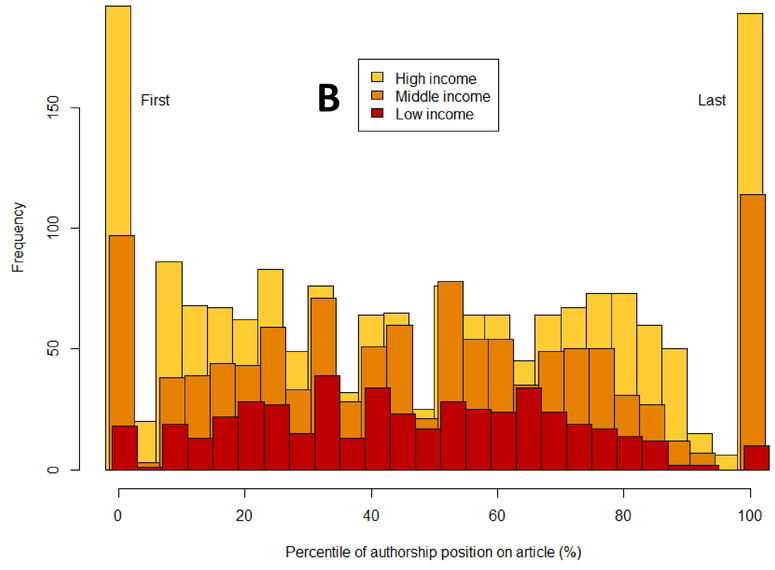
In IeDEA-SA, female authors are under-represented in the last and over-represented in the first authorship positions. LIC authors are largely under-represented in both.

During their time in IeDEA-SA between 2007 and 2020,

- **Female** authors published on average 2.8 articles; vs. **male** authors 3.5 articles.
- **Female** authors were more likely to publish as **first authors** than men, OR=1.67 (1.03-2.72), but less likely to publish as **last authors**, OR=0.64 (0.41-0.99).



- **LIC** authors published on average 2.3 articles, **MIC** authors 4.3 articles, and **HIC** authors 3.1 articles.
- **LIC** authors were less likely to publish as either **first** or **last** author compared to HIC authors; OR=0.23 (0.12-0.46) and OR=0.20 (0.10-0.44), resp. For **MIC** authors the corresponding odds were also lower; OR=0.55 (0.33-0.94) and OR=0.82 (0.53-1.27), resp.



Figures: Distribution of authorship positions by **A)** author's gender and **B)** income level of author's country of affiliation.

CONCLUSIONS

- We found large inequalities in the authorship positions by both authors' gender and country of affiliation in IeDEA-SA.
- Female authors published fewer articles than male authors and were under-represented in the last authorship position, while they were over-represented in the first position.
- Authors from LIC published less than authors from HIC and were under-represented in both first and last authorship positions.
- Monitoring of publication rates and authorship position promotes transparency and equity.

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