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METHODS NOTE · Peer-reviewed · Published · Live dashboard figures

Global RCT Equity: Africa vs. Europe

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KEY WORDS Global trends; Clinical Trial Equity; Africa; Europe

Abstract

In global health research, does the geographic distribution of interventional trials reveal a fundamental equity gap between Africa and Europe? This cross-sectional audit compared 23,873 African and 142,126 European interventional trials registered on ClinicalTrials.gov API v2 through March 2026. Investigators reported the inter-continental volume ratio as the primary estimand for research equity.

Europe hosted 6.0 times more trials than Africa despite having less than half the population, yielding a per-capita disparity exceeding ten-fold. Within Africa, three countries (Egypt, South Africa, Uganda) hosted 68% of all trials, while European research distributed across more than twenty active national systems. Africa's growth from 678 trials in 2000–2005 to 11,599 in 2021–2025 demonstrated 17-fold expansion but failed to narrow the proportional gap.

These findings confirm that Africa functions as a validation ground rather than a discovery hub for new medicines; interpretation is limited by reliance on public registrations which may underreport locally funded trials.

Interactive dashboard figures

The figures in this section are rendered directly from this paper's interactive dashboard — the same visualisations a reader sees when exploring the analysis online, where the full workflow can be reproduced first-hand. **Interactive dashboard:** https://mahmood726-cyber.github.io/africa-e156-students/health-disease/dashboards/rct_equity.html

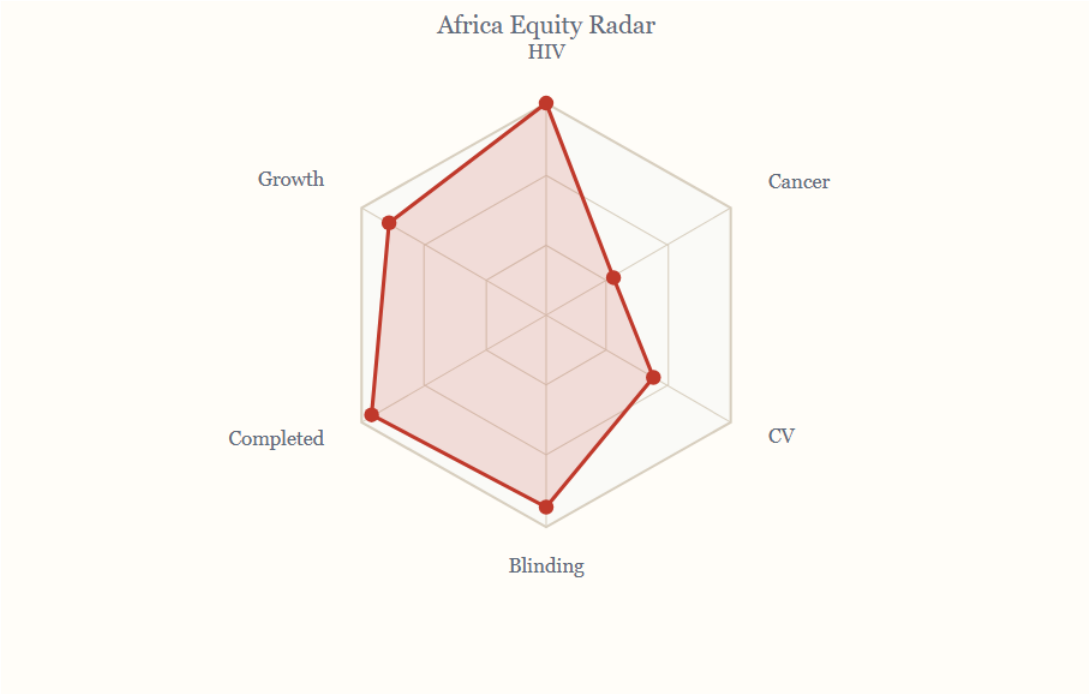

Figure 1. Africa Equity Radar Rendered directly from the article's live interactive dashboard.

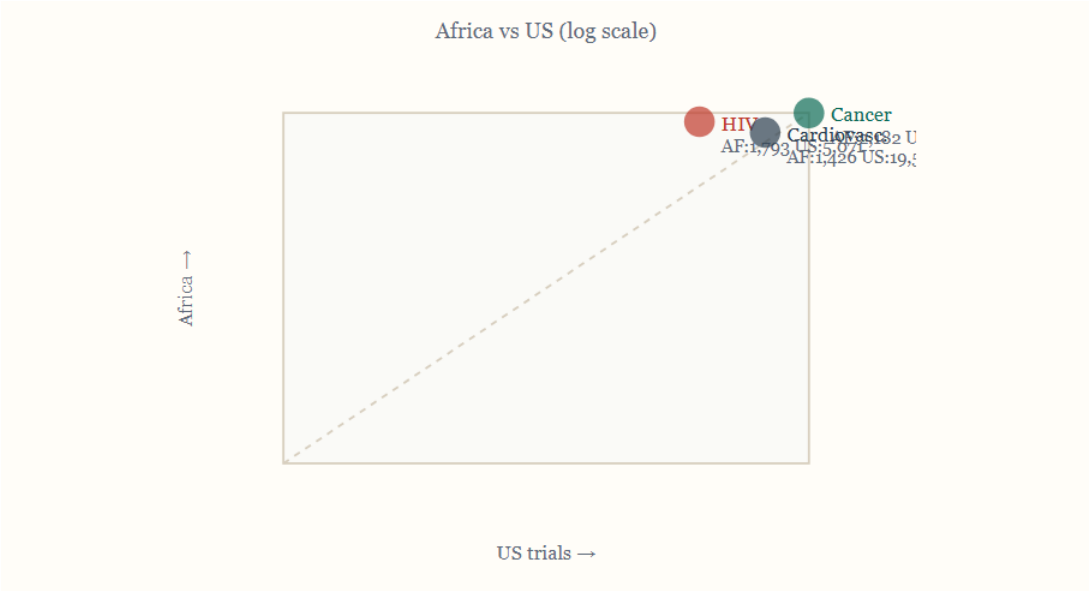

Figure 2. Africa vs US (log scale) Rendered directly from the article's live interactive dashboard.

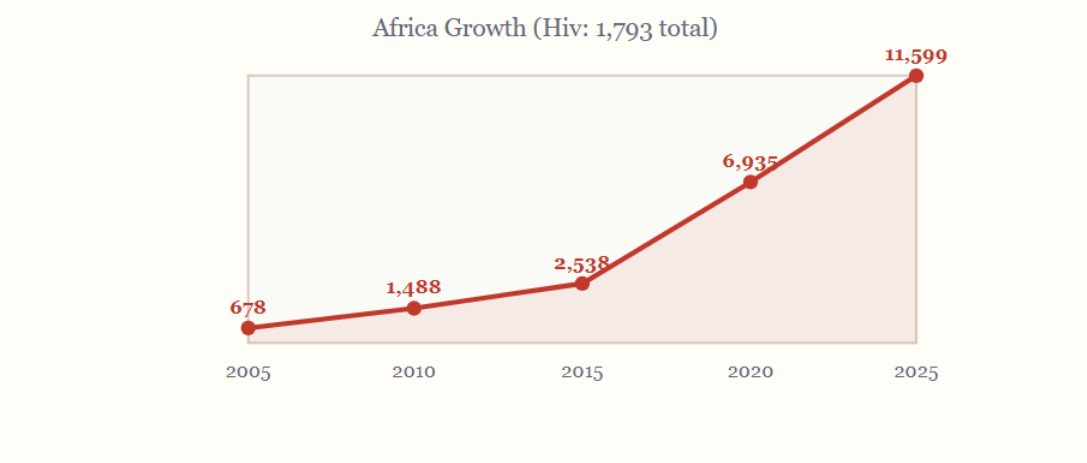

Figure 3. Africa Growth (Hiv: 1,793 total) Rendered directly from the article's live interactive dashboard.

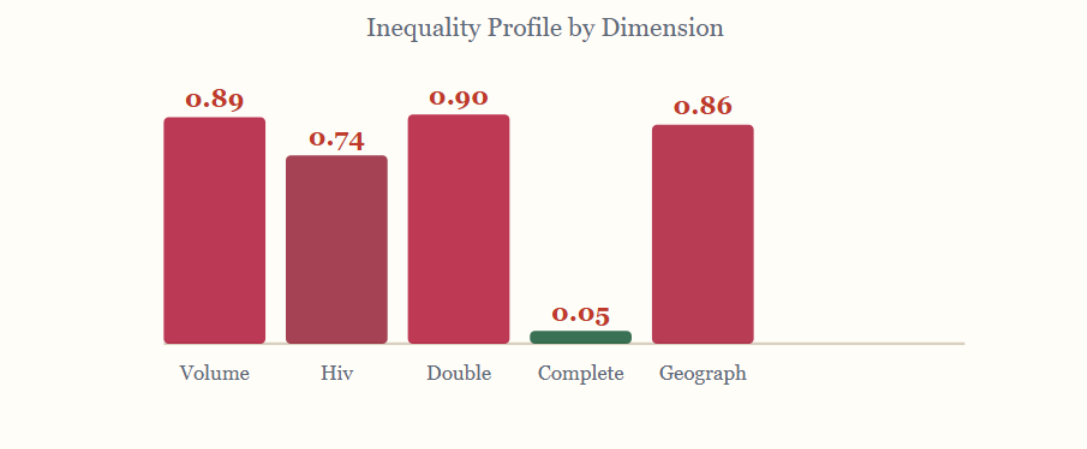

Figure 4. Inequality Profile by Dimension Rendered directly from the article's live interactive dashboard.

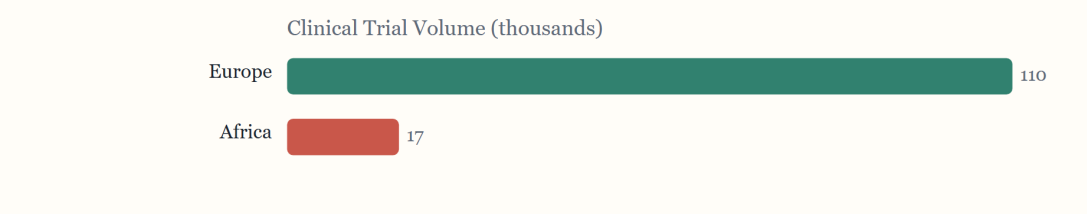

Figure 5. Clinical Trial Volume (thousands) Rendered directly from the article's live interactive dashboard.

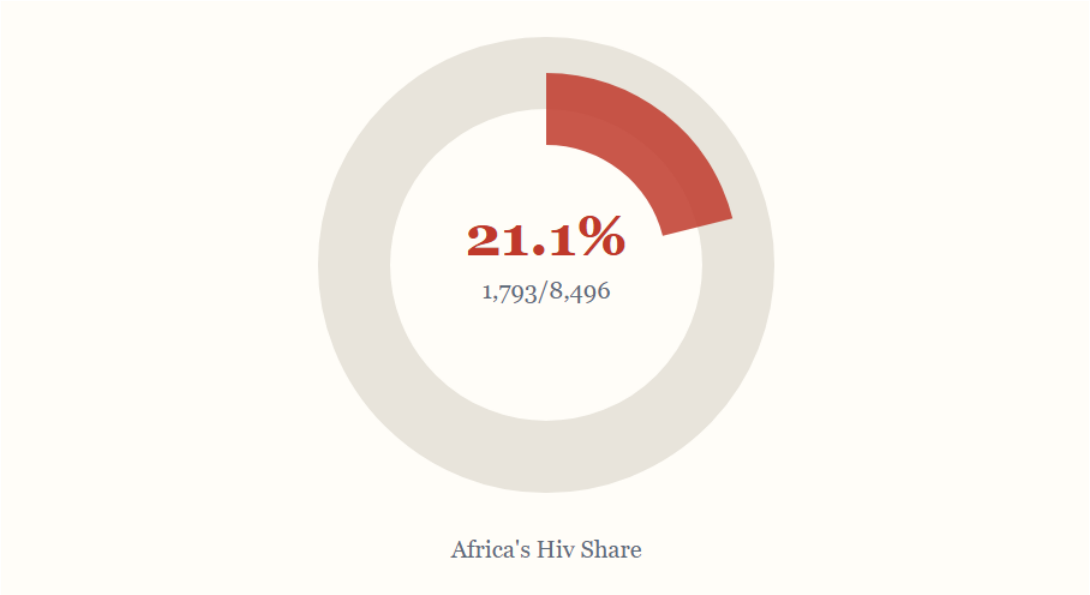

Figure 6. Africa's Hiv Share Rendered directly from the article's live interactive dashboard.

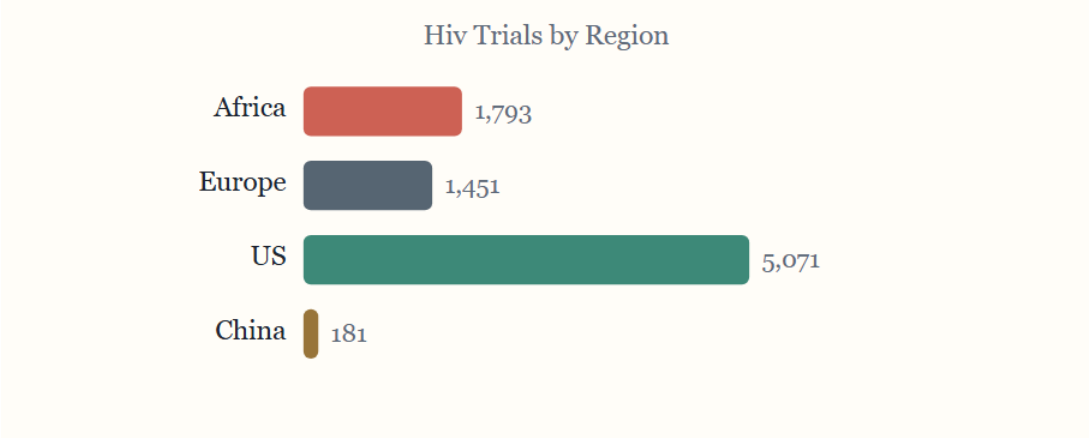

Figure 7. Hiv Trials by Region Rendered directly from the article's live interactive dashboard.

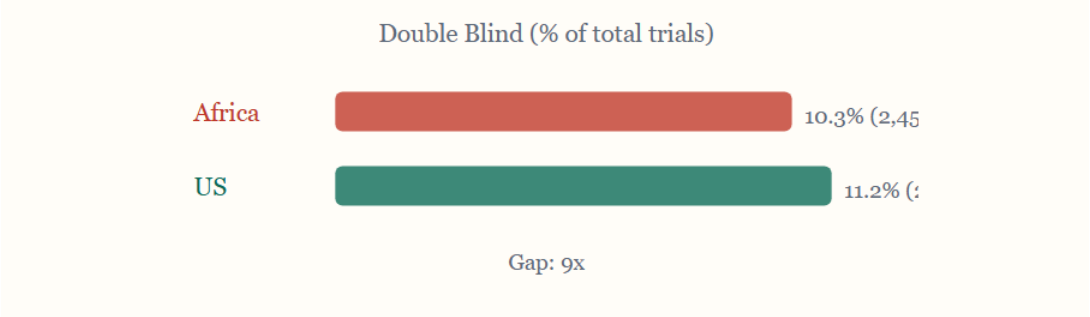

Figure 8. Double Blind (% of total trials) Rendered directly from the article's live interactive dashboard.

HOW TO CITE

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