

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

Participant Compensation Ethics in African Trials: A Cross-Sectional Analysis of Trial Distribution and Ethical Implications

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KEY WORDS Clinical trials; Africa; Research inequality; Gini coefficient; Global health ethics; Research governance

Background

Inequities in global clinical research may influence participant compensation and ethical standards in low-resource settings

Methods

A cross-sectional analysis of 23,873 interventional trials conducted in Africa and 190,644 in the United States was performed using ClinicalTrials.gov data up to April 2026. Inequality in trial distribution across African countries was assessed using the Gini coefficient with bootstrap resampling for stability

Results

Clinical trials were highly concentrated in a small number of African countries (Gini = 0.732). Sensitivity and bootstrap analyses confirmed the robustness of this estimate

Conclusion

The unequal distribution of trials reflects structural disparities in research investment and governance, which may limit regional autonomy in evidence generation and raise ethical concerns regarding participant engagement and compensation

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/governance-justice/dashboards/participant-compensation.html>

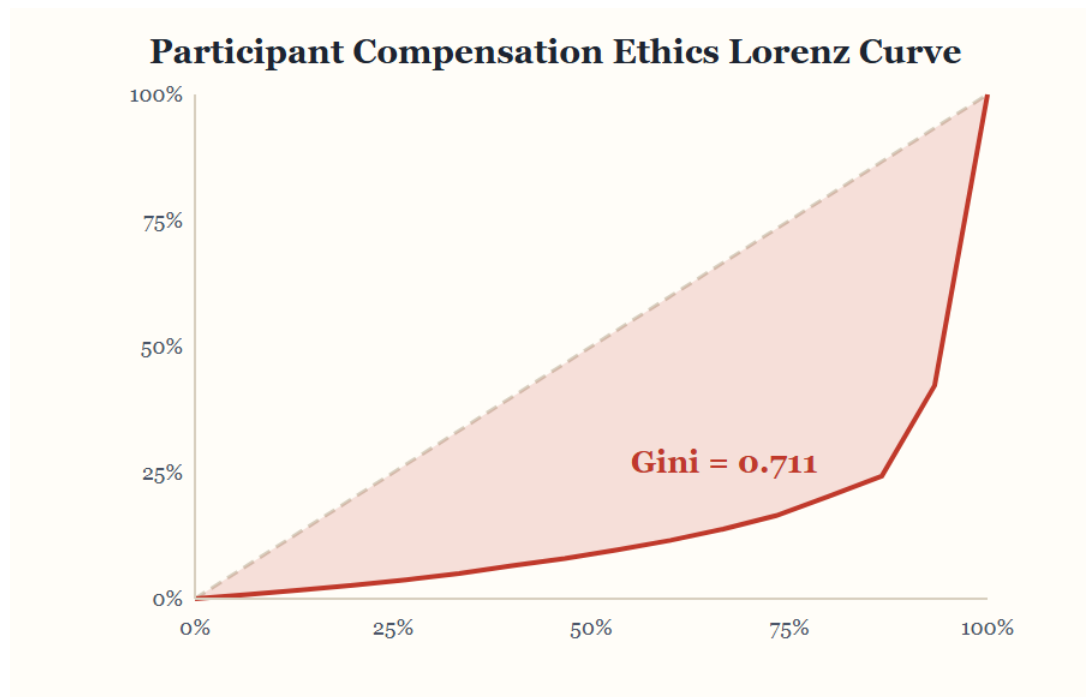


Figure 1. Participant Compensation Ethics Lorenz Curve Rendered directly from the article's live interactive dashboard.

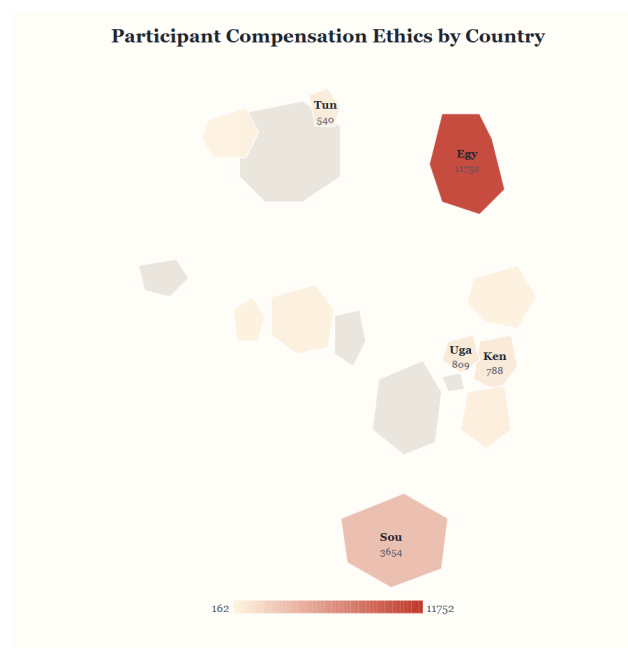


Figure 2. Participant Compensation Ethics by Country Rendered directly from the article's live interactive dashboard.

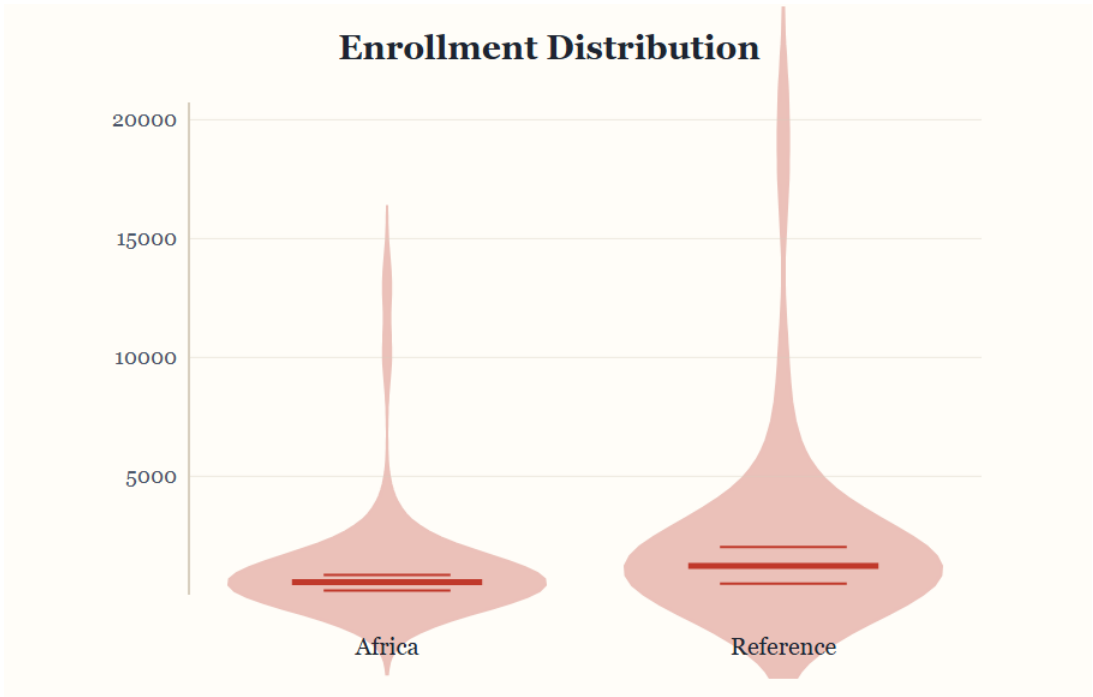


Figure 3. Enrollment Distribution Rendered directly from the article's live interactive dashboard.

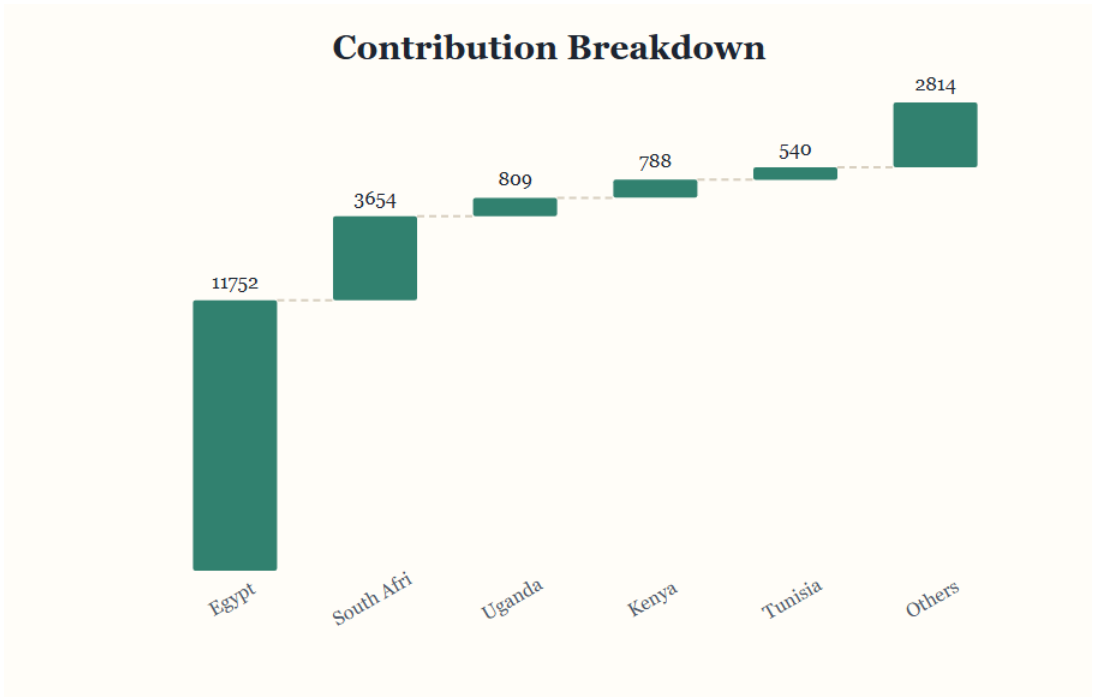


Figure 4. Contribution Breakdown Rendered directly from the article's live interactive dashboard.



Figure 5. Growth 2010-2026 Rendered directly from the article's live interactive dashboard.

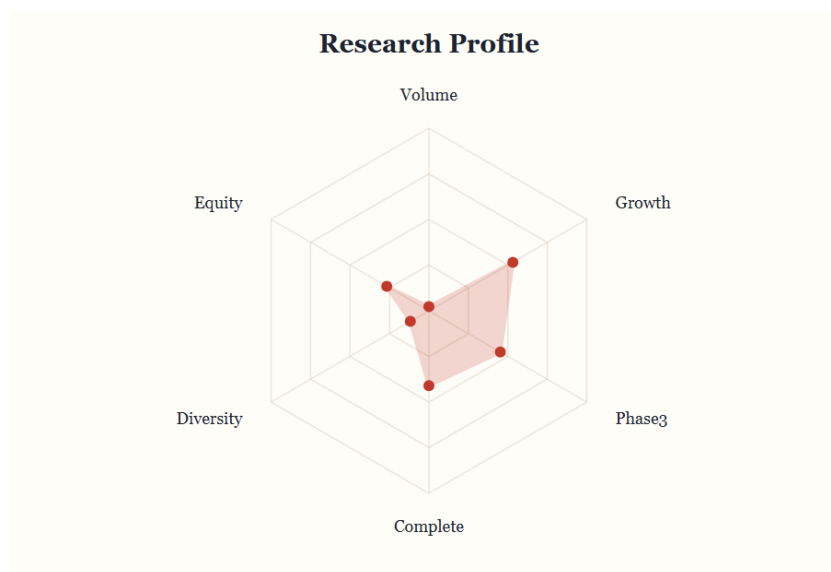


Figure 6. Research Profile Rendered directly from the article's live interactive dashboard.

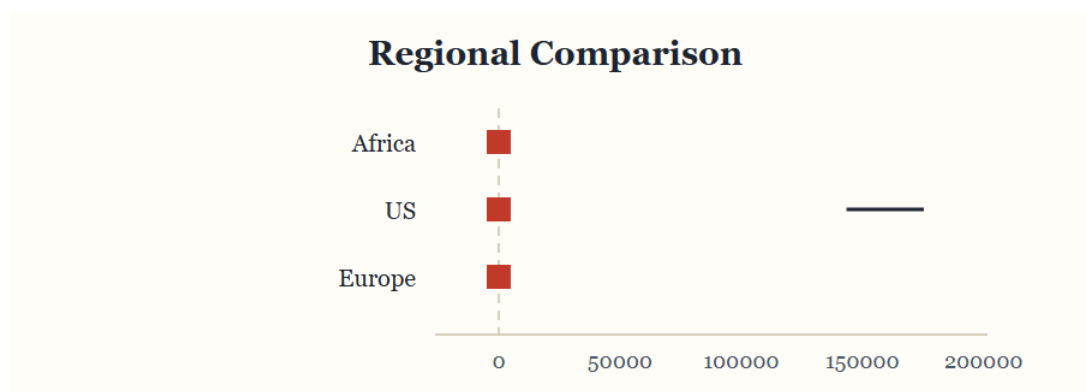


Figure 7. Regional Comparison Rendered directly from the article's live interactive dashboard.

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Reproducibility & data provenance. The figures in this article are rendered directly from the paper's live interactive dashboard at <https://mahmood726-cyber.github.io/africa-e156-students/governance-justice/dashboards/participant-compensation.html>, where the complete analysis — data, methods and every estimate — can be explored and reproduced. This open path from published figure back to the underlying analysis is part of how the journal works. The article's text, authors, abstract, issue and licence follow the journal's published record.

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