

# Systematic Review of Surgical Literature from Resource-Limited Countries: Developing Strategies for Success

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## Abstract

### Background

Injuries and surgical diseases are leading causes of global mortality. We sought to identify successful strategies to augment surgical capacity and research endeavors in low-income countries (LIC's) based on existing peer-reviewed literature.

### Methods

A systematic review of literature from or pertaining to LIC's from January 2002 to December 2011 was performed. Variables analyzed included type of intervention performed, research methodology, and publication demographics such as surgical specialty, partnerships involved, authorship contribution, place and journal of publication.

### Findings

A total of 2049 articles met the inclusion criteria between 2002 and 2011. The two most common study methodologies performed were case series (44 %) and case reports (18 %). A total of 43 % of publications were without outcome measures. Only 21 % of all publications were authored by a collaboration of authors from low-income countries and developed country nationals. The five most common countries represented were Nepal (429), United States (408), England (170), Bangladesh (158), and Kenya (134). Furthermore, of countries

evaluated, Nepal and Bangladesh were the only two with a specific national journal.

### Interpretation

Based on the results of this research, the following recommendations were made: (1) Describe, develop, and stimulate surgical research through national peer-reviewed journals, (2) Foster centers of excellence to promote robust research competencies, (3) Endorse partnerships across regions and institutions in the promotion of global surgery, and (4) Build on outcome-directed research.