

## Supplementary material 2: Search Strategy

The search strategy was developed with the assistance of institutional librarians and built around three search blocks: 'informed consent', 'surgery and surgical procedures', and 'Sub-Saharan Africa'. In order for our study to be as comprehensive as possible, the search strategy was designed to capture potential variations of terms related to informed consent (e.g. 'written consent', 'informed decision making', 'patient autonomy') and surgery sub-disciplines commonly found in the SSA related literature (e.g. gynaecological, obstetric, paediatric and orthopaedic surgical procedures). The search strategy was first tested in Medline, reviewed and subsequently adapted as necessary.

The original search string can be found in the table below.

*Supplementary Table 1. Example of original search string*

S1	"informed consent" OR written consent OR verbal consent OR "informed decision making" OR "shared decision making" OR patient autonomy OR "information disclosure"
S2	(MH "Informed Consent")
S3	S1 OR S2
S4	surgery OR surgical procedure* OR operation OR operations
S5	(MH "General Surgery") OR (MH "Surgical Procedures, Operative") OR (MH "Obstetric Surgical Procedures") OR (MH "Gynecologic Surgical Procedures") OR (MH "Orthopedic Procedures") OR pediatric procedure* OR paediatric surgery OR orthopaedic surgery OR obstetric surg*
S6	S4 OR S5
S7	subsaharan africa OR ghana OR nigeria OR togo OR ivory coast OR cotes d'ivoire OR benin OR burkina faso OR cameroon OR cape verde OR angola OR chad OR "central african republic" OR ethiopia OR gambia OR kenya OR eritrea OR liberia OR mali OR malawi OR senegal OR rwanda OR uganda OR somalia OR botswana OR tanzania OR zambia OR zimbabwe OR sierra leone OR seychelles OR niger OR mauritius OR namibia OR sudan OR burundi OR congo OR guinea OR gabon OR djibouti OR lesotho OR madagascar OR mauritania OR ...

S8 (MH "Africa South of the Sahara") OR (MH "Africa") OR (MH "Africa, Western") OR (MH "South Africa") OR (MH "Africa, Eastern") OR (MH "Africa, Southern") OR (MH "Africa, Central")
S9 S7 OR S8
S10 S3 AND S6 AND S9
S11 S3 AND S6 AND S9 Limiters - Date of Publication: 20100101
S12 S3 AND S6 AND S9 Limiters - Date of Publication: 20100101; English Language