How Many Plastic Surgeons Does It Take to Write a Paper? A 10-year Bibliometric Analysis of Authorship Inflation

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No Relevant Disclosures
**Introduction**

- Publication count as a metric
  - Residency and fellowship applications
  - Academic promotion
  - Research funding
- 5-fold Increase in number of authors

**Aim**

- Evaluate authorship trends in plastic surgery literature
- Identify predictors of author inflation
Methods

- Bibliometric analysis of 3 journals from 2010-2020: PRS, Annals of PS, JPRAS
- Article type: case reports, cohort studies, basic science, literature reviews, and systematic reviews
- Plastic surgery topic: aesthetic, breast, craniofacial, education and technology, hand, and reconstruction
- Sex of senior author: male and female
- Geographical origin: Africa, British Isles, East Asia, Middle East, Europe, North America, Oceania, South America, and South & Southeast Asia
Results

- 5593 articles; greatest no. of authors = 21
- 2% were single authored
- Median number of authors increased (4.5 vs 6, \( p<0.01 \))
  - Cohort study, basic science, literature reviews, systematic reviews
  - Aesthetic, breast, craniofacial, education and technology, hand, and reconstruction
  - Both sexes
  - British Isles, East Asia, Europe, North America, and South & Southeast Asia

Number of authors per article

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\( r = 0.20 \)

\( p<0.01 \)
Results: Multivariable regression

Basic science
Cohort studies
Systematic reviews
Aesthetic
Hand
Middle East
British Isles
South & Southeast Asia

Favours fewer co-authors
Favours more co-authors

Odds Ratio

p<0.01
p<0.01
p<0.01
p<0.01
p=0.02
p=0.01
p<0.01
p=0.02
Discussion

• Authorship inflation is present in plastic surgery literature
• Increased research complexity and collaboration
• Gift authorship

• Resident education
• Stricter journal policies and engagement