

## **Abstract**

Background Undergraduate student research activity facilitates their independent thinking, interest in evidence based practice and preparation for graduate programmes. Reports from African Universities are, however, scarce. This study aimed at describing the factors that influence research among medical students in a Kenyan University. Subjects and Methods This descriptive cross sectional study involved medical students at the School of Medicine, University of Nairobi. An open questionnaire regarding research activity was administered to 150 medical students. Responses were analyzed for year of study, attitude, participation, stimulants, deterrents and publication output. Results One hundred and twenty two (81.3%) responses were analyzed. Majority (50.8%) were in fifth year. Of the respondents 81.6% expressed interest in participating in research, but only 38.4% of them had participated in research with 13.7% taking part in writing a research paper. Stimulants included contribution to advancement of knowledge (54.1%) and fulfillment of academic requirements (51.4%). Major deterrents were lack of research mentors (51.9%), knowledge of research methods (37.7%) and funding (29.9%). Of 41 published papers, 85.4% were co-authored with faculty. Conclusion Lack of mentors, training in research methodology and funding are main deterrents. Inclusion of research methodology in curricular, enhanced faculty involvement and budgetary support for research are recommended.