Congratulations to the ACS-COSECSA Women Scholars Program award winners!

There is a severe shortage of surgeons in Sub-Saharan Africa. Current data indicate that there are only 0.5 surgeons for every 100,000 people. Although women make up more than 50 percent of the population, they represent only 7 percent of the surgical workforce.

To help address this problem, the American College of Surgeons (ACS) and the College of Surgeons of East, Central, and Southern Africa (COSECSA) have developed a scholarship program to support women in surgical residency, help them complete their training, and encourage other women in medicine to consider surgery as a profession.

Congratulations to this year’s winners.

To learn more about the ACS-COSECSA Women Scholars Program, visit facs.org/ogb.
Mahder Eshete Yilma, MD

Dr. Mahder Eshete Yilma is a fourth-year orthopaedic surgery resident at Black Lion Specialized Hospital in Ethiopia. When she was nine years old, a mass formed around her right knee. Without medical scanning, physicians feared it was malignant and suggested amputation. Before that could happen, an Australian orthopaedic surgeon intervened. He became the model of everything she wanted to be, and no prejudice about women’s strength or capacity to succeed could deter her from joining that field. One of her hopes is to decrease the rate and severity of complications resulting from practicing bonesetters, and she plans to do so by raising awareness of these issues and providing traditional bonesetters with additional information.

Wambui Njoroge, MD

Dr. Wambui Njoroge is a senior house officer for the department of surgery at Kenyatta National Hospital in Kenya. She is currently pursuing a masters of medicine degree while actively pursuing postgraduate training options. Her work led her to attend the 13th World Congress of the International Society for Diseases of the Esophagus held in October 2012. All the while, she has striven to be a role model for other women and to inspire others to join the field. Once she completes her degree and her fellowship with COSECSA, she hopes to pursue additional training in thoracic surgery.

Miriam Maimbo, MD

Dr. Miriam Maimbo is a general surgeon at Levy Mwanawasa University Teaching Hospital in Lusaka, Zambia. In 2014, she earned her masters in general surgery from the University of Zambia. More recently, she was given the opportunity to serve the hospital as the acting head of the department. She hopes to make the most of her tenure there by making the site a training facility for COSECSA students.

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Kenseko Aidah, MD
Dr. Kenseko Aidah is a general surgeon at the Moi Teaching and Referral Hospital. Her interest in medicine developed early on while she was still a child growing up in her home town of Hoima, Uganda. As the daughter of a veterinary doctor, she was only 11 when she first helped her mother deliver a calf. This experience planted the seed of what would eventually be a deep fascination with the human body. As a result, she was drawn to the bachelor’s degree program in medicine and surgery at Makerere University in Kampala, Uganda, which she completed in 2004. She would go on to the COSECSA training program while enrolled in the master of medicine in general surgery program in St. Francis Hospital Nsambya. She hopes to make significant contributions to the region through research and innovation.

Ananya Kassahun, MD
Dr. Ananya Kassahun is in her final year of residency in the department of orthopaedics traumatology at Black Lion Specialized Hospital in Ethiopia. Since she was young, she wanted to be someone who had the capacity to heal and save lives. With this goal in mind, she entered the Gondar College of Medicine and Health Science. Like many women in the field, she encountered many challenges, but her mother had taught her to be a strong woman, giving her the strength to carry on. She hopes to continue in pediatric orthopaedics, and with her skills, she plans to be a role model to other women just as her mother was for her.

Mukagaju Francoise, MD
Dr. Mukagaju Francoise is the general surgery senior registrar at King Faisal Hospital in Rwanda. She earned her bachelor’s degree in general medicine from the National University of Rwanda in 2009. Surgical electives early on in her studies peaked her interest in orthopaedic surgery. However, a lack of women in the field raised some doubts for her. Dedication and determination have won out in the face of doubt, and she is determined to pursue her dreams. In the future, she hopes to focus more on laparoscopic and endoscopic surgery, surgical specialties that her region needs.
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Nardos Worku Ketema, MD

Dr. Nardos Worku Ketema is in her final year of surgical residency at Black Lion Hospital, Addis Ababa University and is working towards her masters degree in public health at Jimma University in Ethiopia. Growing up, she was interested in health care and in helping people, and as she grew, these interests converged into something that could not be easily smothered by the challenges and setbacks women pursuing careers in surgery inevitably encounter. She is particularly interested in pediatric orthopaedic surgery.

Woubedel Kiflu Akililu, MD

Dr. Woubedel Kiflu Akililu is a pediatric surgeon and assistant professor of the department of surgery at Addis Ababa University in Ethiopia where she completed both her undergraduate and postgraduate degree in 2010 and 2014, respectively. This unit is the only established center in the country, and the resulting challenges have inspired her to seek out further trainings and sub-specialization and to someday establish more pediatric surgery centers at different sites across Ethiopia.

Florence Umurangawa Ngarambe, MD

Dr. Florence Umurangawa Ngarambe is a junior consultant urologist at King Faisal Hospital in Rwanda. She is also the chair of the Association of Women in Surgery, Rwanda and the treasurer of the Rwanda Surgical Society. She recently completed her masters of medicine degree at the University of Rwanda. Her entrance into the urology field is rather unheard of in her country, and she hopes that through her presence and example, she can lead more young women into the field.

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