

Running a successful journal club

Some aims of a journal club:

- Continuing professional development
- Keeping up-to-date with the literature
- Disseminating information on and build up debate about good practice
- Ensuring that professional practice is evidence-based
- Learning and practicing critical appraisal skills
- Providing an enjoyable educational and social occasion

You might have other ideas... It is useful for the participants to set the goals of the journal club together.

Tips for setting up a journal club:

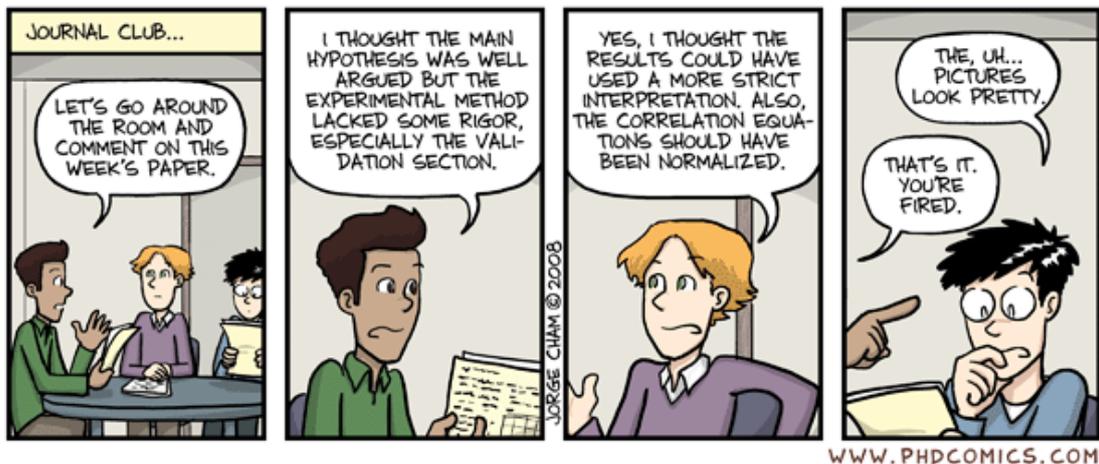
- Roles and responsibilities should be clearly defined
- Meetings should have a chair or facilitator
- One person should be responsible for co-ordinating the meetings
- All members should be encouraged to contribute their views
- Each member should commit to reading the article beforehand
- A training needs assessment for the group should be carried out
 - The format for the meetings should be decided in response to the needs of the members
- Training should be provided as needed (critical appraisal, presentation skills *etc*)
- Important to have an environment of shared learning
- Clear boundaries: start and finish times, timetable for the year all made clear well in advance
- Refreshments should be provided! This makes journal clubs last longer and gives higher attendance
- Needs to be supported by staff at all levels in the department

Content of the meetings:

- This can be topic based (this is more work-through), or you can look at an article of interest
- One person to present and discuss a paper or topic, or you can discuss the article as a group
- If one person is presenting, you can use this as an opportunity to practice and give feedback on presentation skills
- Critical appraisal journal clubs: choose an article on a topic of interest/recently published paper and appraise it using a checklist
- Evidence-based journal clubs: start with a real clinical question (end of a meeting); search the literature (Ask the Library staff to help you); select and read the most relevant paper (before the next meeting); appraise it at the next session; decide whether/how to put it into practice
- **TIP:** Avoid pulling the paper to bits in critical appraisal – the point is to objectively weigh the paper's strengths against its weaknesses

Websites and References:

- ACP Journal Club summarise the best new evidence for internal medicine from over 130 clinical journals and provides a clear concise outline of current research <http://annals.org/journalclub.aspx>
- Cochrane Journal Club: Finally – no more searching for relevant and interesting papers to present at your next journal club meeting! We provide everything you need to present the paper... <http://www.cochranejournalclub.com/>
- Journal Club Guidelines from Sheffield Children's NHS Foundation Trust: http://www.sheffieldchildrens.nhs.uk/downloads/library/Library_JournalClubHandbook.pdf
- For people thinking of running Evidence-Based Journal Clubs the US MLA have information on their website on organising and running them: <http://www.mlanet.org/education/telecon/ebhc/clubintr.html>
- Manchester Royal Infirmary have published a leading article on setting up the Journal club in the emergency medicine department which is available on their website at: <http://www.bestbets.org/teaching/current.php> which gives some useful tips on setting one up, structuring the journal club using critical appraisal checklists and journal selection.
- There is an article in the BMJ Careers about successful journal clubs (13 October 2007) with hints and tips <http://careers.bmj.com/careers/advice/view-article.html?id=2631>
- Here is a very nice little article on 'How to make journal clubs interesting', also covering setting up a journal club. It is in Swift, Geraldine (2004) Advances in Psychiatric Treatment vol 10 pp 67-72. Although published in a psychiatric journal, it applies to any journal club. <http://apt.rcpsych.org/content/10/1/67.full>



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