Conducting a Journal Club
A group of individuals who meet regularly to critically discuss applicability of current articles found in medical journals

The earliest mention of a journal club occurred in London in 1835–1854 in the memoirs of Sir James Paget, a surgeon at St Bartholomew’s Hospital who described “a kind of club in a small room over a baker’s shop near the hospital gate where we could sit and read journals and play cards”

Evidence of the first formal journal club dates back to 1875 when William Osler of McGill University Montréal found a way to make expensive periodicals affordable by purchasing expensive journals with fellow students at a group rate.

Goals

- To teach critical appraisal skills
- To have an impact on clinical practice
- To keep up with current medical literature

Benefits to Practice Site

- Keep abreast of new knowledge
- Promote awareness of current research findings
- Stay familiar with the best current clinical research
- Encourage research utilization
- Improve patient outcomes
- Network and improve interpersonal relationships with other healthcare providers and specialists

Benefits to Students

- Journal clubs have been advocated as a bridge between research and practice

Selecting a Journal Club Article

- Choosing the right article can be tedious
  - Time-consuming
Research

- **Literature Search**
  - Specialty Journals
    - *Pediatrics, Cardiology*
  - Non-specialty Journals
    - *NEJM, Lancet, JAMA*
  - Secondary Literature
    - PubMed, Ovid

Selecting the Right Article

- Bigby, et al. devised a shortcut method to quickly select an article
- It consists two important processes
  - Elimination
  - Analysis

Elimination

- Title, Abstract
- Tables, Graphs, Figures
- Results
- Critical Questions

Analysis

- Methods
- Conclusion
- Discussion
- Introduction

Journal Club Presentation

- What is the research question(s)?
- Is the study design appropriate? Methods?
- Does this study advance current practice?
- What are the next steps in interpreting the data?
Journal Club Presentation (cont’d)

- Summarize
- Critique
  - Strengths
  - Weaknesses/Limitations
  - Unanswered questions
- Affect on current practice

Teaching Methods

- Deciding how to respond to a clinical scenario (small-group discussion)
- Understanding the guidelines for critical appraisal
- Appraisal of research paper using the guidelines
- Deciding how to respond to the findings of research article

The Success of a Journal Club

Criteria for effective journal club

- More than 2 years of existence without periodic abandonment
- More than 50% attendance of the expected audience

Factors associated with effective journal club

- Explicit written learning objectives
- Having a designated club leader
- Mandatory attendance
- Formal teaching of critical appraisal skills
- Regular attendance by faculty

 Factors associated with effective journal club
  - High value given by program director
  - Smaller residency program (12 or less residents)
  - Incorporation of adult learning principles
  - Provision of free food
  - Use of a structured checklist for article review

References


